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Franklin—Greene Correspondence

Memoirs of the
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
held at Philadelphia
for Promoting Useful Knowledge
VOLUME 26



FIG. 1. Portrait of Benjamin Franklin given by Franklin to the daughter of Mme Helvétius when he was in France, recently purchased from the family by the American Philosophical Society. Artist unknown.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
and
CATHARINE RAY GREENE



Their Correspondence

1755 - 1790

EDITED AND ANNOTATED BY
WILLIAM GREENE ROELKER

Director, Rhode Island Historical Society

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
INDEPENDENCE SQUARE
PHILADELPHIA

1949

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Preface

THE letters here published are the only surviving record of the long and devoted friendship of Benjamin Franklin and Catharine Ray, later Mrs. William Greene. Some of the letters have been published before in the standard editions of Franklin's writings. But as they have been printed in chronological order in the mass of correspondence without regard for subject matter, these purely personal letters have been completely submerged. When brought together with the familiar letters written to him, many of which have never been published, they portray a kindly, mellow, domestic side of Franklin, which is little known to the world.

This volume is the first attempt to bring these personal letters together and give the background of the rare friendship between a Block Island girl, whose husband became governor of his state, and Franklin, world famous scientist and statesman. All of the letters here included, except the few otherwise noted, are in the Library of the American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia. Some few of the originals have disappeared. The editor has therefore taken the text of these either from a printed version, or from the long hand copies found among the papers purchased by the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1945 from the heirs of Governor Samuel Ward.

A number of original letters from Franklin to Mrs. Catharine (Ray) Greene, both before and after her marriage in 1758, and from Mrs. Jane Mecom, were at the Greene Homestead in Warwick, Rhode Island, which is still in the possession of her descendants. In 1946 the American Philosophical Society acquired these letters because the heirs felt that such manuscripts should not be subject to the hazards of private ownership.

To make it easier to read this volume and to comprehend this unknown side of Franklin, the editor has introduced each letter with historical notes. All quoted sources are listed at the end of each chapter.

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In the transcription of the letters here printed, the editor has retained both the original spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. In cases where there is no punctuation between sentences, a space has been left to indicate the division. Words or letters which are illegible or missing in the original manuscripts have been supplied whenever possible in brackets. Explanatory phrases, words, or letters supplied by the editor are in brackets.

Books referred to for the first time are given with full title, name of publisher, and place and date of publication. In succeeding references only the author's name and an abbreviated title of the book are given.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge with thanks the many helpful suggestions made by my friends. For twenty years Lawrence C. Wroth, Librarian of the John Carter Brown Library, has been encouraging me to this effort. I am indebted to the staff of the American Philosophical Society for valuable assistance and helpful criticism. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Yale University Library, and the New England Historic Genealogical Society have been generous in permitting the use of manuscripts in their collections. Clifford P. Monahan, Librarian, Rhode Island Historical Society, and Clarkson A. Collins, 3d, Research Associate, have rendered invaluable assistance in many ways. The index has been prepared by Miss Olive B. Weavill. And my wife has been a tower of strength since this work was begun.

W. G. R.

Greene Farm
Warwick, Rhode Island
May, 1949.

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Introduction

THERE are many books about Benjamin Franklin; he has been pictured as the statesman and politician, the inventor and scientist, the philosopher and sage. His writings and sayings, his appearance and manner, have been described in many of the languages of the civilized world. Less has been written about his domestic life, his friendships, and his relations with his family. For example, almost nothing has been written of the friendship between Franklin and Mrs. Catharine (Ray) Greene, which endured from the time they met at Boston about 1754 until his death in 1790. Their correspondence, beginning in 1755 and continuing with some lapses until 1789, preserves the record of a long friendship. Yet in all those years they saw each other on but five occasions—for the last time in 1776 at Philadelphia.

Franklin exchanged letters with several women; but the correspondence with Caty Greene was unique. In the first place it lasted for thirty-four years, somewhat of a record in itself; and secondly, Caty was, in a way, a member of the Franklin family, as her sister Judith was daughter-in-law of John Franklin. Again, she had struck up an immediate intimacy with Jane Mecom, Franklin's sister, when they met in 1754. Jane lived in Rhode Island with her grandniece, Mrs. Elihu Greene, only two miles from Caty's between 1777 and 1782. It is worthy of note that Caty was often inspired to write to Franklin after a visit to Jane. Any letter from Franklin to either Caty or Jane was the occasion for a long gossip or "feast" as they called it.

More than a hundred letters have been discovered, including the letters which passed between Franklin and Catharine, their several letters to Jane Mecom, and her replies. A number of Franklin's letters to the two women have been printed with his other correspondence by Sparks, Duane, Bigelow, Smyth, and Van Doren. Most of them, especially the most interesting and important ones, have not been published previously; and no attempt has been made to bring them together, nor to integrate them with the many letters written to him by Catharine and Jane.

Catharine Ray is the figure around whom the correspondence centers. She was married, baptized, and buried as Catharine, although nearly all writers have persistently written Catherine. The place where she was born and raised, Block Island, is twelve miles out at sea from Point Judith, the extreme southernmost point of Rhode Island. It must have been a dreary abode for an intelligent, fun-loving, and attractive girl of twenty-three! All three of her sisters were married, and she lived alone with her aged parents. Her father, Simon Ray, was then eighty-two and her mother sixty-five. The youngest sister, Phebe, was the wife of John Littlefield, an Islander. The other sisters had married on the mainland: Judith was the wife of Thomas Hubbard of Boston; Anna had married Samuel Ward, son of Richard Ward, former Governor of the Colony of Rhode Island. Franklin was well acquainted with the numerous Ward family of Newport and Westerly, all of whom were tied by family, political, or business associations with the large body of descendants of Surgeon John Greene, a founder of Providence and Warwick. Truly a New England family association.

"Katy," as Franklin addressed her, or "Caty," as she signed herself, in 1758 married her second cousin, William Greene of Warwick, the son of Governor William Greene. Her mother, Deborah (Greene) Ray, was a great-granddaughter of Roger Williams, and also a member of the extensive Greene family. Other Greenes who enter prominently into the correspondence are Nathanael, the Revolutionary General, who married Caty's niece, "Kitty" Littlefield; and his brother, Elihu, who married Franklin's grandniece, Jane Flagg.

On the Franklin side, after Benjamin himself, by far the most prominent is Jane, his favorite sister and wife of Edward Mecom of Boston. Jane early became attached to Caty, whom she met at the Hubbard mansion at Cornhill, Boston, after John Franklin, Benjamin's brother, had married the widow Hubbard in 1753. Caty and Jane were some twenty years apart in age, and their relationship was in a way that of parent and child, Caty calling her "my mama and friend." When Boston was under siege by the American Colonials in the spring of 1775, Jane Mecom fled the town and took refuge with her friend Mrs.

Catharine Greene at Warwick, Rhode Island. She continued a guest at Warwick until late in October, when her brother Benjamin called for her and in his carriage escorted her, together with Caty's ten-year-old son Ray, to Philadelphia. The correspondence between Jane and Caty began at this time and continued until Franklin's death. Both women idolized Franklin, and there never is a letter from either one that does not inquire the latest news of their "dear Friend." In later years when Franklin was at Paris his every letter provided "a feast" for the two devoted women.

Another bond centered around Franklin's daughter Sarah (Sally), who married Richard Bache in 1767. Sally visited Catharine in 1763 when her father was making a tour of inspection of the post offices; and Catharine met Sally's husband and children when she accompanied her husband William Greene to Philadelphia on Colony business in July, 1776. Jane and Caty both thrived on domestic history as did Franklin himself; all their letters teem with the small details of family events. Thus around Catharine Greene at Warwick, the Hubbards at Boston, Governor Samuel Ward and his family at Westerly and Newport, and the Franklin-Baches at Philadelphia there was a web of intimacy, friendship, and love, which is reflected in this collection of letters. They portray an informal, little known side of Franklin as does no other group of the thousands of letters that he wrote.

Caty Greene was a woman of vital personality. Unfortunately there is no known picture of her. But according to family tradition her niece "Kitty" (Littlefield) Greene was very like her—a rather small brunette with high color, a vivacious expression, and a snapping pair of dark eyes.

It is evident from the letters that Caty Greene had a fine mind and a keen sense of humor; that she loved people and always had a house full of guests, including the Franklins, Mecoms, and Wards. She was a very motherly person. Not only was she devoted to her own children, particularly her eldest son Ray, but she also took in several parentless female relatives and saw to it that they were properly married.

Nowhere in her letters does Caty refer to her husband as "William," always as "Mr. Greene," a custom which persisted well into the nineteenth century. From what she writes, William Greene was frequently from home on business; by profession he was a surveyor, by avocation a man devoted to the public service. From 1774 to 1777 he was an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Rhode Island, and in 1777 Chief Justice. Thereafter for eight years (1778-1786) he served as Governor of the State.

Caty bore him six children, ran the household and the farm, and was in every way a model eighteenth-century housewife. But she greatly enjoyed her rare visits with the Hubbards, the Mecoms, and the Partridges at Boston, also her more frequent, if less exciting excursions to Providence. When the French officers were in Rhode Island, she was exuberant. There is no record of her dancing, yet she was an intimate of Nathanael Greene whose terpsichorean ability is well known. Her niece "Kitty," the General's wife, once danced a square dance for four hours with General Washington without once sitting down.

Caty Greene, like Jane Mecom and most of the women of the eighteenth century, had no formal education; there was none to be had on Block Island. But she was interested in improving her mind. Reading her letters from the first to survive in 1755 to her last to Franklin in 1789, one is struck by the improvement in the ease of her expression and her calligraphy.

From the time her son Ray was a small boy she was determined that he should have an education, though his immediate forebears had little formal schooling. Her husband was equally concerned. So Ray, at the age of ten, was sent off to Philadelphia with Franklin, who put him to Latin School. Afterwards he was sent to Governor Dummer Academy at Newbury, Massachusetts, from which he graduated. Then through the good offices of Dr. Ezra Stiles he was admitted to Yale and graduated with the class of 1784.

Caty's friendship with Ezra Stiles shows her intellectual curiosity. That he was her mentor suggests that she had a mind worthy of his attention. Eventually he persuaded her, at the age of forty-three, to make, in the Kent County Court House

at East Greenwich, a public profession of faith and to be baptized by affusion. Another college president was numbered among her friends, John Wheelock, second president of Dartmouth, who, knowing of her interest in learning, applied to her for a letter of introduction to Franklin.

The Letters of Benjamin Franklin and Jane Mecom edited by Carl Van Doren and *The Correspondence of Samuel Ward, May 1775–March 1776* edited by Bernhard Knollenberg, both to be published shortly, will illuminate the life of the plain human being that was Benjamin Franklin.

I. The First Meeting

1755 - 1757

FRANKLIN had set out from Philadelphia in August, 1754, on a tour of inspection and regulation of the post offices. During November¹ and December he was in the vicinity of Boston, where he had held various conferences with Governor Shirley regarding the aftermath of the Albany Convention. But he did not neglect post office business. He had appointed his brother John, a tallow chandler, postmaster in place of Elias Huske. The *Boston Weekly-News Letter* for January 2, 1755, had carried the following announcement: "Notice is hereby given, That the Post Office is now kept at Mr. John Franklin's in Cornhill, December 30, 1754."

Because in the eighteenth century it was customary for visitors to stay with their relatives, Franklin naturally put up at his brother John's, where Caty was visiting her sister Judith in the early winter of 1754-1755.

"Mr. John Franklin's in Cornhill" was the mansion which Mrs. Elizabeth (Gooch) Hubbard had inherited in 1732 on the death of her husband, John Hubbard. John Franklin came to live there when he married the widow Hubbard in 1753. From the Land Title Records in the Bowditch Collection at the Massachusetts Historical Society the exact location of the property has been established; the site is now occupied by the northeasterly part of the Ames Building. The Hubbard property fronted 21 feet on Cornhill (now Washington Street) and extended 144 feet towards Dassetts Alley (now Franklin Avenue). At the corner of the latter and Queen Street (now Court Street) was the Printing Office where James and Benjamin Franklin had published the *New England Courant*.

At this period Franklin's sister, Jane Mecom, also lived in Boston not far from the Hubbard's. She kept a boarding house, at one time near the Orange Tree Inn at the corner of Hanover and Sudbury streets and at another time near the Blue Ball,

Hanover and Union streets. For some years Franklin turned over to Jane the income from the only property he ever owned in Boston, the house at 19 Unity Street, which Jane eventually moved to in 1784 and which she owned after Franklin's death. In 1939 the house was purchased by the George R. White Fund of Boston and torn down in order to extend the vista from the Paul Revere Mall to the Old North Church.²

Though the Hubbard homestead was called a mansion, it was only a twenty-one-foot house, probably two stories high. At least two families, both with many children, lived there continuously. Inasmuch as eighteenth-century business was usually conducted in the home, the street floor front was almost surely a store like the one later occupied by Paul Revere at 50 Cornhill nearby. In these crowded conditions Caty and Franklin must have been thrown together much of the time during their visits. What could be more thrilling to Caty than meeting the famous Dr Franklin! It is true that he was nearly forty-eight years old, married, and had a twelve-year-old daughter. But he was a distinguished person and a charmer. It is not surprising that Caty was impressed, the more so because from the outset he was greatly taken by her wit and gaiety. Heady wine for a young girl! She was fascinated and flattered by the attention he paid her. He thought "Sugar Plums" sweeter if made by her hands. He admired her mind and was stimulated by the quick responsiveness of her intellect, and his ability to read her thoughts caused her playfully to accuse him of being a "conjurer." Twenty-five years later she wrote him at Paris: "I with Pleasure look Back Upon those Pleasant days I used to See you in Boston and the A Greeable Journey to Westerly which you have Some times Mentiond."

Franklin and Caty had set out in a carriage from Boston on December 30, 1754, for Newport, Rhode Island. No details of this memorable journey are known, but it may be supposed that they followed the usual route through Dedham, Walpole, Wrentham, Attleborough, Rehoboth, Warren, and over the ferry at Bristol to Newport. The distance was about seventy miles. If the speed of their travel can be judged by that made

by Mrs. Abigail Adams in 1789, Franklin and Caty must have been a full two days on the road.

The probable overnight stop at a tavern has caused some raising of eyebrows as to their relationship. It has been insinuated that Catharine was just another of Franklin's conquests. But it may be stated without fear of contradiction that their relationship was quite innocent. Indeed the evidence is nothing less than a statement in his own hand. In a letter dated October 16, 1755, Franklin gives Catharine "some fatherly Advice." He tells her to get a good husband: "You must practice *Addition* to your Husband's Estate, by Industry & Frugality; *Subtraction* of all unnecessary Expenses; *Multiplication* (I would gladly have taught you that myself, but you thought it was time enough, & wou'dn't learn) he will soon make you a Mistress of it."

At Newport Caty would of course be put up by her Ward connections; Franklin may have been the guest of Anne, widow of his brother James. She had continued the printing shop where James had published *The Rhode-Island Gazette* (September 27, 1732) first newspaper in the Colony. The shop was located under the Town School House on the north side of the Parade, now Washington Square. Franklin's brother Peter, a mariner, also lived in Newport.

Working backwards from March 1, when Franklin arrived home at Philadelphia after spending three or four weeks loitering on the road from Westerly, and from the date of Caty's first letter, January 20, written after her return to Block Island, it seems that they lingered awhile at Newport, maybe for ten days or so before setting out for her sister Anna Ward's near Westerly. She had married Samuel Ward, later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and Governor for three terms. Franklin and Caty were entertained by "the agreeable family of the Wards at Newport" to whom he sent his compliments in the postscript to his letter of March 4.

From Newport the usual route was over the ferry to Jamestown, across the island of Conanicut, and then by the South Ferry to the mainland, and by way of Tower Hill, a full day's journey to the Ward farm. Such a journey over winter roads

in 1755 was a prolonged adventure, with conversation the only form of diversion. Franklin took advantage of the opportunity to instruct his young friend, and twenty-one years later she wrote him: "I impute [a] Great Part of the happiness of my life to the Pleasing lessons you gave me in that Journey." It is quite possible that they remained with the Ward family for several days before Caty was called back to the bedside of a sick parent on Block Island.

Franklin lingered on the way home, probably visiting friends at New London. On February 5, Dr. Ezra Stiles "pronounced a Latin oration, in the College Hall, in compliment to Doctor Franklin, then on a visit to the literati at New-Haven." His host in New Haven was James Parker, whom he had persuaded in January, 1755, to undertake the publishing of the *Connecticut Gazette*.³ Franklin did not reach Philadelphia until March 1, and three days later he wrote his first letter to Caty.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO CATHARINE RAY
AT BLOCK ISLAND⁴

Philadelphia, March 4, 1755.

Dear Katy:—

Your kind letter of January 20th is but just come to hand, and I take this first opportunity of acknowledging the favour. It gives me great pleasure to hear, that you got home safe and well that day. I thought too much was hazarded, when I saw you put off to sea in that very little skiff, tossed by every wave. But the call was strong and just, a sick parent. I stood on the shore, and looked after you, till I could no longer distinguish you, even with my glass; then returned to your sister's [Anna Ward], praying for your safe passage. Towards evening all agreed that you must certainly be arrived before that time, the weather having been so favourable; which made me more easy and cheerful, for I had been truly concerned for you.

I left New England slowly, and with great reluctance. Short day's journeys, and loitering visits on the road, for

three or four weeks, manifested my unwillingness to quit a country, in which I drew my first breath, spent my earliest and most pleasant days, and had now received so many fresh marks of the people's goodness and benevolence, in the kind and affectionate treatment I had everywhere met with. I almost forgot I had a *home*, till I was more than half way towards it; till I had, one by one, parted with all my New England friends, and was got into the western borders of Connecticut, among mere strangers. Then, like an old man, who, having buried all he loved in this world, begins to think of heaven, I began to think of and wish for home; and, as I drew nearer, I found the attraction stronger and stronger. My diligence and speed increased with my impatience. I drove on violently, and made such long stretches, that a very few days brought me to my own house, and to the arms of my good old wife and children, where I remain, thanks to God, at present well and happy.

Persons subject to the *hyp* complain of the northeast wind, as increasing their malady. But since you promised to send me kisses in that wind, and I find you as good as your word, it is to me the gayest wind that blows, and gives me the best spirits. I write this during a northeast storm of snow, the greatest we have had this winter. Your favours come mixed with the snowy fleeces, which are pure as your virgin innocence, white as your lovely bosom, and—as cold. But let it warm towards some worthy young man, and may Heaven bless you both with every kind of happiness.

I desired Miss Anna Ward to send you over a little book I left with her, for your amusement in that lonely island. My respects to your good father, and mother, and sister. Let me often hear of your welfare, since it is not likely I shall ever again have the pleasure of seeing you. Accept mine, and my wife's sincere thanks for the many civilities I receive from you and your relations; and do me the justice

to believe me, dear girl, your affectionate, faithful friend,
and humble servant,

B. Franklin.

P.S. My respectful compliments to your good brother Ward, and sister; and to the agreeable family of the Wards at Newport, when you see them. Adieu.

Caty was uneasy about the fate of her letters when she wrote Franklin June 28. He had not yet received this letter when he wrote her September 11. He had passed a busy spring and early summer procuring teams and pack horses to transport the supplies for General Braddock's expedition against Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh). Braddock, who had expected to take Duquesne quickly, was disastrously defeated and almost all of his troops massacred in an Indian ambush, July 9, 1755. Pennsylvania was in a panic for fear the French and Indians would attack its unprotected border. But the blow did not fall immediately, and during the lull, on September 11, Franklin wrote his longest letter to Caty.

He had then before him three of her letters — she dated them March 3, March 31, and April 28, but she was never too certain of the date, once dating a letter "August 22 I forget year," — therefore the dates Franklin gives are probably correct: March 3, March 30, and May 1. Unfortunately all of these are missing. In his gayest mood he refused to be serious about her confidences and asked what she had been doing; whether she "continu'd ever since in that Monastery [Block Island]; or have broke into the World again, doing pretty Mischief," and he teased her about her beaux. Probably Caty had accused him of an ability to read her thoughts, said he was a conjurer. The song which he quotes is in all probability of his own composition.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO CATHARINE RAY
AT BLOCK ISLAND⁵

Philada Sept. 11. 1755.

Begone, Business, for an Hour, at least, & let me chat
a little with my Katy.—

I have now before me, my dear Girl, three of your Favours, viz. of March the 3^d March the 30th & May the 1st. The first I received before I set out on a long Journey and the others while I was on that Journey, which held me near Six Weeks. Since my Return, I have been in such a perpetual Hurry of publick Affairs of various kinds, as render'd it impracticable for me to keep up my private Correspondencies, even those that afforded me the greatest Pleasure.

You ask in your last, How I do, & what I am doing, and whether every body loves me yet, and why I make 'em do so [torn] Thanks to God, that I do not remember I was ever better. I still relish all the Pleasures of Life that a temperate Man can in reason desire, & thro' Favour I have them all in my Power. This happy Situation shall continue as long as God pleases, who knows what is best for his Creatures, and I hope will enable me to bear with Patience and dutiful Submission any Change he may think fit to make that is less agreeable. As to the second Question, I must confess, (but don't you be jealous) that many more People love me now than ever did before: For since I saw you, I have been enabled to do some general Services to the Country, and to the Army, for which both have thank'd and prais'd me; and say they love me; they *say so*, as you us'd to do; and if I were to ask any Favours of them, would, perhaps, as readily refuse me: So that I find little real Advantage in being belov'd, but it pleases my Humour.

Now it is near four Months since I have been favour'd with a single Line from you; but I will not be angry with you, because 'tis my fault. I ran in debt to you three or four Letters, and as I did not pay, you would not trust me any more, and you had some Reason: But believe me, I am honest, and tho' I should never make equal Returns, you shall see I'll keep fair Accounts.—Equal Returns I can never make, tho' I should write to you by every Post: For the Pleasure I receive from one of yours, is more than

you can have from two of mine. The small News, the domestic Occurrences among our Friends, the natural Pictures you draw of Persons, the sensible Observations and Reflections you make, and the easy chatty Manner in which you express every thing, all contribute to heighten the Pleasure; and the more, as they remind me of those Hours and Miles that we talk'd away so agreeably, even in a Winter Journey, a wrong Road, and a soaking Shower.

I long to hear whether you have continu'd ever since in that Monastery; or have broke into the World again, doing pretty Mischief; how the Lady Wards do, and how many of them are married, or about it; What is become of Mr B. & Mr L. and what the State of your Heart is at this Instant?—but that, perhaps I ought not to know; and therefore I will not conjure, as you sometimes say I do. If I could conjure, it should be to know what was that *oddest Question about me that ever was thought of*, which you tell me a Lady had just sent to ask you.

I commend your prudent Resolutions in the Article of granting Favours to Lovers: But if I were courting you, I could not heartily approve such Conduct. I should even be malicious enough to say you were too *knowing*, and tell you the old Story of the Girl & the Miller.

I enclose you the Songs you write for, and with them your Spanish Letter with a Translation. I honour that honest Spaniard for loving you: It show'd the Goodness of his Taste and Judgment. But you must forget him, and bless some worthy young Englishman.

You have spun a long Thread, 5022 Yards! It will reach almost from Block Island hither. I wish I had hold of one End of it, to pull you to me: But you would break it rather than come. The Cords of Love & Friendship are longer and stronger, and in Times past have drawn me farther; even back from England to Philadelphia. I guess that some of the same kind will one day draw you out of that Island.—

I was extreemly pleas'd with the Turff you sent me. The Irish People who have seen it, say, 'tis the right sort; but I cannot learn that we have anything like it here.—The Cheeses, particularly one of them, were excellent: All our Friends have tasted it, and all agree that it exceeds any English Cheese they ever tasted—Mrs Franklin was very proud, that a young Lady shod have so much Regard for her old Husband, as to send him such a Present. We talk of you every time it comes to Table; She is sure you are a sensible Girl, and a notable Housewife; and talks of bequeathing me to you as a Legacy; But I ought to wish you a better, and hope she will live these 100 Years; for we are grown old together, and if she has any faults, I am so us'd to 'em that I don't perceive 'em, as the Song says,

Some Faults we have all, and so may my Joan,
 But then they're exceedingly small;
 And now I'm us'd to 'em, they're just like my own,
 I scarcely can see 'em at all,
 My dear Friends,
 I scarcely can see them at all.—

Indeed I begin to think she has none, as I think of you. And since she is willing I should love you as much as you are willing to be lov'd by me; let us join in wishing the old Lady a long Life and a happy

With her respectful Compliments to your good Mother & Sisters, present mine, tho' unknown, and believe me to be,
 Dr Girl,

Your affectionate Friend
 & humble Servant
 B Franklin

Sally says, Papa, my Love to Miss Katy.
 If it was not quite unreasonable I should desire you to write to me every Post, whether you hear from me or no. As to your Spelling, don't let those laughing Girls put you

out of Conceit with it. 'Tis the best in the world, for every Letter of it stands for something.—

The enclosures mentioned are the original of a letter in Spanish addressed to Miss Catherine Ray from Don Laureano Donado de el Castillo from Cadiz Bay, June 7, 1751, together with a translation in Franklin's unmistakable handwriting, and a fragment of a letter addressed to her brother-in-law, Thomas Hubbard. These have been in the hands of Caty's descendants and are here published for the first time.

One may wonder at the long interval between the date of the Spanish letter (June, 1751) and the time when Franklin returned the translation, September 11, 1755. It is possible that this letter had been in Caty's possession for several years before she found someone whom she could entrust with the translation. Franklin met her requirements; she trusted him completely; and even if he knew little Spanish, he was in a position to obtain a translation for her.

A comparison of Franklin's translation of the original with a literal translation reveals that the former was largely embellished by Franklin's easy style.

DON LAUREANO DONADO DE EL CASTILLO AT CADIZ BAY TO
CATHARINE RAY AT BLOCK ISLAND⁶

Translation from the Spanish

Dear Miss Catherine Ray
Beloved of my Heart.

I arrived safe in the Bay of Cadiz on the 7th of June, at 11 a Clock in the Morning, and as a Vessel was ready to sail your Way, I embrac'd the Opportunity to send you these Lines, before going ashore to see my Friends. I hope

you enjoy your Health, in company with your good Father, Mother & Sisters, to whom pray remember me most cordially.—

I am extreemly melancholy, my dear Katey, with Concern for your Health, & a thousand Desires to see you, and the Uncertainty whether you still remember your Laureano. You know I love you very much, and gave you a Father's Advice, which pray remember. Preserve a cautious Conduct, & put no Confidance in Men. Be prudent, and beg of God to make you a Saint; for which End it is necessary to shun Men, and take care to guard against their Deceits. Trust in God, and he will always help you.

By your Letter, which I receiv'd in Salem, I judge you had been 18 Days from home. Your Parents will greatly rejoice to see their Katey again, as I should myself very much, and hope God will grant me that Pleasure before a Year passes. Remember, Child, what I told you one Sunday Evening, which you promised not to forget, as it was said in the Presence of God. Remember my Advice, and trust in me, and take care of your self for my sake. I have no other to care for. I have not been at Cadiz, so can write you nothing about my Brother and Sister.—

Endeavour to keep the safe middle Way, and be neither lifted up nor cast down to your hurt. Eat & drink so as to preserve your precious Health, and remember your loving Spaniard &

Very humble Servant

Laureano Donado de El Castillo.

Cadiz Bay
June 7. 1751—}

Querida Oñi, Dona Catharina Ray -

Hija muy amada de mi Corazon alas orillas
de Manco y de lunis de que confesado esta
laia de Cadix y con buena salud y porque
vale este Chiqui Manco para Maxagela
antes de una amiga hermana y hermana te
escribo esta letra desde el Chiqui
Ocas que estas buena y que lo estan mis her-
manas sus Amas, Madres y hermanas acuyos
jios mepones con el Mayor Rendimiento
Hija animada Lo mucho melancolia por
mi querida Cate muy triste y con mucha
decepcion de mi y porque no se si tu te acen-
dasas de tu hermano Va sabe mi con-
to y que como su Padrecito te amo muy
mucho, quenta con lo que aces note fies
delos hombres, Amex Juicio y pedira a Dios

FIG. 2. First page of letter from Don Laureano Donado de el Castillo at Cadiz to Catharine Ray at Block Island.

Pray do not forget to write me by every Opportunity, and direct to me as follows, either by way of Boston, or New York.

A Don Laureano Donado de el Castillo
Guarde Dios, muchos años
Junto a Santo Domingo
Cadiz

Thus directed it will come safe to me.

Pray don't be melancholy, but divert yourself by reading virtuous Books, and doing such Things as a virtuous Mind can approve, in company with your good Sister and Niece rather than with Men; for depend upon it, they will offer much & bestow nothing but a Shadow; and the Ladies are like Glass.—

I hope the 3 Tickets, No 66, 67, 68. will come up 2000 Dollars each; & that which I gave between you & your Sister 300. all of which may happen if you have Luck enough—

My dear Heart, do not kill me by forgetting your poor Spaniard, but pray to God for him who is devotedly yours. You may imagine I have Sweethearts in Abundance, 1, 2, 3 in a Row: but 'tis no such Matter, I am yours only

Laureano

It is not surprising that Caty had become agitated about the fate of her too frank letters. After five months on Block Island with no one to confide in, her fears fed upon themselves. Thinking back, what she had written must have seemed to her more indiscreet than it really had been. Since she had promised Franklin to be more restrained in what she committed to paper, she probably felt that he was offended and therefore did not reply. So, on condition of an answer, she once more promised "an amendment," that she would not write so freely. Enclosed was an offering of "Sugar Plums" every one "Sweetn'd as you used to like," that is, made with the hands that he had called sweet.

CATHARINE RAY AT BLOCK ISLAND TO FRANKLIN
AT PHILADELPHIA⁷

Block Island June ye 28th [1755]

Dear, Dear Sir

Excues my writeing when I tell you it is the great regard I have for you will not let me be Silent, for Absence rather increasis than lesens my affections then, my not receiveing one line from you in answer to 3 of my last letters March ye 3^d & 31st and April ye 28th gives me a Vast deal of uneasiness and occation'd many tears, for Suerly I have wrote too much and you are affronted with me or have not received my letters in which I have Said a thousand things that nothing Should have tempted me to [have] Said to any body els for I knew they wold be Safe with you—I'll only beg the favor of one line what is become of my letters tel me you are well and for give me & love me one thousandth Part So well as I do you and then I will be Contented and Promise an a mendment, it is with the greatest reluctance I Shall finish my letter with out telling you of Some great alterations Since my last but you have my Promise So I will Pray God to Bless you with the Best of Blessings and Subcribe my Self Dear Sir

your most Sincere affectionate &
obliged friend

C Ray

My Proper Respects to
Mrs Franklin & Daugter

Pray take Care of your health and except the Sugar Plums they are every one Sweetn'd as you used to like

In reply to her unhappy letter Franklin sent a very characteristic answer. He had heard that she was in Boston, completely recovered from the attack of the blues which had possessed her in June. So he ignored the substance of her letter and proceeded to give her "some fatherly Advice" in his best

and lightest manner. This "Multiplication" letter is one of the most famous of the thousands that he wrote. As if to say, "Let all this agitation be forgotten," he concluded with a post-script that the sugar plums had come safe and were especially sweet because made by her hands.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO CATHARINE RAY
AT BLOCK ISLAND⁸

Philadelphia Oct. 16. 1755

Dear Katy

Your Favour of the 28th of June came to hand but the 28th of September, just 3 Months after it was written. I had, two Weeks before, wrote you a long Chat, and sent it to the Care of your Brother Ward. I hear you are now in Boston, gay and lovely as usual. Let me give you some fatherly Advice. Kill no more Pigeons than you can eat.—Be a good Girl, and don't forget your Catechise.—Go constantly to Meeting—or Church—till you get a good Husband;—then stay at home, & nurse the Children, and live like a Christian.—Spend your spare Hours, in sober Whisk, Prayers, or learning to cypher.—You must practise *Addition* to your Husband's Estate, by Industry & Frugality; *Subtraction* of all unnecessary Expences; *Multiplication* (I would gladly have taught you that myself, but you thought it was time enough & woud'n't learn) he will soon make you a Mistress of it. As to *Division*, I say with Brother Paul, *Let there be no Divisions among ye*. But as your good Sister Hubbard (my Love to her) is well acquainted with *The Rule of Two*, I hope you will become as expert in the *Rule of Three*; that when I have again the Pleasure of seeing you, I may find you like my Grape Vine, surrounded with Clusters, plump, juicy, blushing, pretty little rogues, like their Mama. Adieu. The Bell rings, and I must go among the Grave ones, and talk Politicks.

Your affectionate Friend

B Franklin

Dear Katy

Philadelphia Oct. 16. 1755

Your favour of the 28th of June came to hand but the 28th of September, just 3 months after it was written. I had, two weeks before, wrote you a long sheet, and sent it to the care of your Brother Ward. I hear you are now in Boston, gay and lovely as usual. Let me give you some fatherly Advice. Kill no more Rigsons than you can eat. — Be a good girl, and don't forget your Catechism. — Go constantly to Meeting — or Church — till you get a good Husband; — then stay at home, & nurse the Children, and live like a Christian. — Spend your spare hours, in sober Whisk, Prayers, or learning to cypher. — You must practise Addition to your Husband's Estate, by Industry & Frugality; Subtraction of all unnecessary Expenses; Multiplication (I would gladly have taught you that myself, but you thought it was time enough, & wouldn't learn) he will soon make you a Mistress of it. As to Division, I say with Brother Paul, Let there be no Divisions among ye. But as your good Sister Hubbard (my dear to her) is well acquainted with the Rule of Two, I hope you will become as expert in the Rule of Three; that when I have again the pleasure of seeing you, I may find you like my Grape Vines, surrounded with Clusters, plump, juicy,

My Catherine Ray —

FIG. 3. Franklin at Philadelphia, October 16, 1755, to Catharine Ray at Block Island.

P.S. The Plums came safe, and were so sweet from the Cause you mention'd, that I could scarce taste the Sugar.

Franklin was not the only one to be attracted by Caty's gaiety and loveliness. He often teased her about the many suitors that gathered around her. These attentions pleased and confused her, and she fell into a habit of asking Franklin's advice in matters of the heart, pouring forth her confidences without regard for discretion. In fact she appears to have expressed her feelings with so little reserve that she became fearful of the consequences should her letters fall into unfriendly hands. In an undated fragment, here published for the first time, Franklin tells her that she may write freely to him about anything she sees fit, with confidence that no one will see her letters but himself.

It has been suggested by other writers, who did not have this fragment before them, that Caty was apprehensive for fear her letters revealed an indiscretion in her relations with Franklin. When, however, the first of Caty's extant letters dated June 28, is read in conjunction with the fragment, there can be no doubt that the cause of her uneasiness was the statements she had written about others. In fact Franklin seemed to have exacted a promise that she would be more circumspect, an engagement which prevented her from telling him of "some great alterations" in her circumstances since her last letter, alterations which could have concerned only her relations with others, not with Franklin.

The undated fragment consists of the last two pages of a folio letter addressed at the bottom of the last page "Miss Katy Ray." It is apparently a reply to a letter of Caty's other than the four we have noticed. Evidently Caty had asked Franklin's advice concerning two young men, possibly the "Mr. B. and Mr. L." mentioned in Franklin's letter of September 11. From the context it appears that some young man had asked Franklin how to conduct his courtship of a girl, but not Caty. Franklin put him off by saying that he did not know her and referred him to "his good Friends in Boston." Then to his surprise Caty wrote him that this same young man had now declared himself

violently in love with her, as Franklin said, "like a Brand brought flaming to a fresh Hearth; but not kindled there, indeed, but it burns nevertheless." Franklin refused to give her the desired advice telling her that no one could judge for her in the affair better than she could for herself, since she knew both men.

After assuring her that her confidence would be respected, he gave her an example of the self-restraint which he had urged her to practice, because "the most innocent Expressions of warm Friendship . . . between Persons of different Sexes, are liable to be misinterpreted by suspicious minds" The excessive compliments Caty had paid Franklin in this and other letters may be the reason why they have not been found.

The only clue to the date of the fragment is in the postscript when he paid his compliments to her father. Caty's father, Simon Ray, died March 19, 1755, so the fragment must have been written before Franklin learned of Ray's death. In his letter of March 4 Franklin had sent his respects to her "good Father;" but on September 11 he had presented Mrs. Franklin's respects only to Caty's "good Mother & Sisters." As Caty had written Franklin March 30 and May 1, both times after her father's death, she undoubtedly had informed him of an event so important in her life. It is probable, therefore, that the fragment is an answer to a letter of which we know nothing, but which must have been written before her father's death.

FRANKLIN [AT PHILADELPHIA] TO CATILARINE RAY
[AT BLOCK ISLAND]⁹

[I told him that as] I did not know her, I must refer him for Advice to his good Friends in Boston, who could better adapt it to Situations, Tempers & Circumstances. Only this I hinted in general, that I thought he would do well not to be too forward in Professions of Love, till by his Assiduities & little Services he had made some Progress in gaining the Lady's Esteem and Affection. For when he had brought Matters to such a Pass, as that she would *wish to know his Intention*, [would] think he delay'd too long his Declaration, and, as the Song says,

Had rather be marry'd than plagu'd with him so, his Proposals, in my Opinion, would be likely to meet with much less Difficulty. I find, however, by yours, that he has declar'd himself all at once violently in love with you. He seems like a Brand brought flaming to a fresh Hearth; not kindled there, indeed, but it burns nevertheless. Nobody can judge for you in this Affair, better than you can for yourself; you know both the Gentlemen, and I believe you will determine rightly. I only pray God to bless you in your Choice; whether it be either of them or any other; and you may depend I shall mention nothing of your having communicated the Matter to me—

You may write freely everything you think fit, without the least Apprehension of any Person's seeing your Letters but myself. You have complimented me so much in those I have already receiv'd, that I could not show them without being justly thought a vain Coxcomb for so doing; and the Hint you give in your last is sufficient for those you may favour me with hereafter. I know very well that the most innocent Expressions of warm Friendship, and even those of meer Civility & Complaisance, between Persons of different Sexes, are liable to be misinterpreted by suspicious Minds; and therefore though you say more, I say less than I think, & end this Letter coolly in the plain common Form, with only

Dear Miss

Your humble Servant

B Franklin

My respectful Compliments
to your good Father, Mother
& Sister I am glad to hear
of his Recovery—
Miss Katy Ray

Late in November, 1755, Franklin began his first and only experience as a military man. The Indians, who had been on a rampage since Braddock's defeat, had burned Gnadenhütten only ninety miles from Philadelphia, and the terror-stricken inhabitants had abandoned the whole northwest frontier. Under these circumstances Governor Morris asked Franklin to lead a body of volunteers to Northampton County to erect a line of stockades and to reassure the people. About the middle of December General Franklin (for General he was called) marched northward through the dangerous hilly country to Gnadenhütten, where he buried the dead and built Fort Allen. Franklin, with his rear secured, ventured to scour the country. He found no Indians, but discovered many traces of where they had been. As the Assembly was about to begin its session, Governor Morris recalled Franklin, who turned his command over to Colonel Clapham and arrived at Philadelphia about February 10, 1756. He learned that John Franklin had died on January 30 after little more than two years of service as Postmaster of Boston. Franklin wrote a brief letter of condolence to Jane Mecom, his favorite sister: "As our number grows less, let us love one another proportionably more." To Elizabeth Hubbard, always a favorite of his, he wrote a letter which shows the close bonds uniting the two families and reveals the delicacy of his sentiments.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO ELIZABETH HUBBARD
AT BOSTON¹⁰

—I condole with you. We have lost a most dear and valuable relation. But it is the will of God and nature, that these mortal bodies be laid aside, when the soul is to enter into real life. This is rather an embryo state, a preparation for living. A man is not completely born until he be dead. Why then should we grieve, that a new child is born among the immortals, a new member added to their happy society?

To keep the office of postmaster in the family Franklin appointed (1756) Tuthill Hubbard, step-son of John Franklin. Tuthill Hubbard, fourth child and third son of John and Elizabeth (Gooch) Hubbard was born July 23, 1720, and died February 8, 1808. He held the office of postmaster until the breaking of relations with England in 1774. He was well esteemed in Boston, serving four terms as selectman, 1780-1784. He was a successful insurance underwriter and accumulated a fortune. The following letter is incident to the appointment.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO ELIZABETH HUBBARD
AT BOSTON¹¹

Philad March 5. 1756

Dear Betsey

Excuse my not writing to your good Mama & my other Friends. I am excessively hurried, & not very well

I shall send a Commission to Cousin Tuthill.—I am going shortly to Virginia if nothing hinders, & could be glad to have the State of the Office Accts & the Ballance, that I may settle it with Mr Hunter.

Pray desire him to put Huske's Bond in Suit. Perhaps it may be recovered, as the King's Debts always have the Preference.

The Lottery draws next Monday.

Adieu. Love to all. I am,

Your affect Papa
B Franklin

Elias Huske, Postmaster before John Franklin, had died subsequent to his removal. Apparently he was indebted to the post office; hence Franklin's instructions to have suit brought upon his bond. William Hunter was joint Deputy Postmaster General with Franklin, as well as Postmaster at Williamsburg and publisher of the *Virginia Gazette*.

Franklin made the journey to Williamsburg, as planned, to consult with William Hunter on post office affairs. Late in

June he wrote Jane Mecom from New York, where he had remained until he returned to Philadelphia in mid-August. Maybe this visit to New York is what led Caty to write him from Boston saying that she hoped soon to see him there. In reply he teased her because she offered an excuse for being in Boston and playfully suggested that there was a suitor involved, and that he knew who it was since he was able to conjure.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO CATHARINE RAY
AT BOSTON¹²

Philad Augt 26. 1756

Dear Katy

I receiv'd your very agreable Line of the 2d Inst. in which you tell me you would write me a long Letter, but that you expect soon to see me in Boston. I know not now when I shall enjoy that Pleasure, being more involv'd in publick Affairs than ever: so that I cannot be so long out of the Province as such a Journey requires: therefore, dear Girl, write me all your little News, for it is extremely entertaining to me.—

Your Apology for being in Boston, "*that you must visit that Sister [Judith (Ray) Hubbard] once a Year,*" makes me suspect you are there for some other Reason: for why should you think your being there would need an Excuse to me, when you knew that I knew how dearly you lov'd that Sister?—Don't offer & hide your Heart from me. You know I can conjure.

Give my best Respects to yr Sister, & tell her and all your other Sisters and Brothers, that they must behave very kindly to you, & love you dearly; or else I'll send a young Gentleman to steal & run away with you, who shall bring you to a Country from whence they shall never hear a Word of you, without paying Postage.—

Mrs Franklin joins in Love to you & sincere Wishes for
[your] welfare, with dear good Girl,

Your affectionate Friend

B Franklin

Early in 1757 Franklin was sent to London by the Assembly of Pennsylvania to represent it in the quarrel with the Proprietors, Thomas and Richard Penn, over the Assembly's right to tax their estates. By March 3 he must have known that he was going abroad, for Franklin wrote Katy on that date to tell her of his plans and to ask forgiveness for failing to answer hers of November 8. So far as we know he had not seen her for more than two years. Because of the dilatory habits of Lord Loudon his packet did not sail from New York till June 2, 1757.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO CATHARINE RAY
AT BLOCK ISLAND¹³

Philadelphia, March 3, 1757.

Dear Katy,

Being about to leave America for some time, I could not go without taking leave of my dear friend. I received your favor of the 8th of November, and am ashamed, that I have suffered it to remain so long unanswered, especially as now, through shortness of time, I cannot chat with you in any manner agreeably.

I can only wish you well and happy, which I do most cordially. Present my best compliments to your good mamma, brother and sister Ward, and all your other sisters, the agreeable Misses Ward, Dr. Babcock and family, the charitable Misses Stanton, and, in short, to all that love me. I should have said all that love you, but that would be giving you too much trouble. Adieu, dear good girl, and believe me ever your affectionate friend,

B. Franklin.

With Franklin gone to London Caty carried on a correspondence with Mrs. Deborah Franklin. Caty confided in her as she had in Franklin, recounting her small personal affairs and asking for advice in matters concerning her suitors. Deborah relayed these requests to Franklin in London to which he replied November 22, 1757: "I am glad to hear that Miss Ray is well, and that you correspond. It is not convenient to be forward in giving advice in such cases. She has prudence enough to judge for herself, and I hope she will judge and act for the best."¹⁴

This is the last bit of correspondence referring to Caty and Franklin until his return from England in November, 1762, by which time Caty had been married to William Greene for more than four years and had borne two of her six children, Phebe and Celia.

1. *The Life of Benjamin Franklin written by himself*, John Bigelow, ed., II. 406, N. Y., Putnam, 1887-1888

2. Letter from Carl Van Doren to the editor, Nov. 5, 1949; Brown, Frank Chouteau, The Clough-Langdon House, 21 Unity Street, Boston, *Old-time New England* 37-79-84, 1947. The White Fund was established to provide Boston with educational and recreational facilities.

3. Holmes, Abiel, *The life of Ezra Stiles*, 26, Boston, Thomas and Andrews, 1798; McAnear, Beverly, James Parker versus John Holt, *Proc. N. J. Hist. Soc.* 59: 78-79, 1941.

4. Franklin, Phila., March 4, 1755, to Catharine Ray at Block Island. Sparks, Jared, *Familiar letters and miscellaneous pieces by Dr. Franklin*, 28-30, Boston, Charles Bowen, 1833, Smyth, A. H., *Writings of Benjamin Franklin* (10v.) III 245-247, N. Y., Macmillan, 1905-1907

5. Franklin, Phila., Sept. 11, 1755, to Catharine Ray at Block Island.

6. Translation in Franklin's hand of a letter from Don Laureano Donado de el Castillo, Cadiz Bay, June 7, 1751, to Catharine Ray at Block Island.

7. Catharine Ray, Block Island, June 28, [1755], to Franklin at Philadelphia.

8. Franklin, Phila., Oct. 16, 1755, to Catharine Ray at Block Island.

9. [Franklin, Phila., no date, fragment], to Katy Ray at Block Island.

10. Franklin, Phila., Feb. 23, 1756, to Elizabeth Hubbard at Boston, Smyth, *Writings* III: 329-330.

11. Franklin, Phila., March 5, 1756, to Elizabeth Hubbard at Boston.

12. Franklin, Phila., Aug. 26, 1756, to Catharine Ray at Boston.

13. Franklin, Phila., March 3, 1757, to Catharine Ray at Block Island. Sparks, *Familiar letters*, 49; Smyth, *Writings*, III: 378.

14. Franklin, London, Nov. 22, 1757, to Deborah Franklin at Phila. Van Doren, Carl, *Benjamin Franklin's autobiographical writings*, 109, N. Y., Viking, 1945.

II. The Hostess

1758 - 1774

CATHARINE RAY took Franklin's advice to "bless some worthy young Englishman" and was joined in matrimony with William Greene, Jr., at Newport, April 30, 1758, by Edward Sands, warden. Catharine was the daughter of Deborah (Greene) Ray; and William, Jr., her husband, was the son of William Greene, both parents the great great grandchildren of Surgeon John Greene, first of the name to emigrate to America. He had landed at Salem in 1635, where he came into friendly association with Roger Williams.

William Greene, Jr., brought his bride to live in the home of his father at the corner of Love Lane and Division Street in Cowesett, the southernmost part of Warwick, about half a mile west and up the hill from the village of East Greenwich, through which ran the Boston Post Road. The mansion house was a "stone-end" house said to have been built in the 1680's, two and one half stories high, with a great stone fireplace on the west side of the "Fire Room" or "Hall." In 1758 the original homestead was some seventy-five years old and seemed small. In anticipation of the marriage of William, Jr. to Catharine Ray an addition was begun consisting of a parlor and a bedroom and attic above it on the west side of the stone chimney.

It is probable that Caty sought to tell Franklin of her approaching marriage, as there is a hint that a letter which contained the news went astray. Not two months after her wedding Franklin wrote his wife from London: "You mentioned sending a letter of Caty's, but it did not come."¹

Franklin landed at Philadelphia, November 1, 1762, after completing the mission for the Colony of Pennsylvania. When Caty learned that he had returned, she wrote promptly to congratulate him on his safe arrival and to tell him of her happy marriage. In reply Franklin expressed his pleasure at her happiness, asked her to write him everything that had happened to

her while he was away, and extended his compliments to Samuel Ward on his election to the office of Governor of Rhode Island in May, 1762.

*These may Certify whom it may concern that I the
 Subscriber one of his Majesty's Wardens for the County
 of Newport did join together in Matrimony bind-
 ing to Law W^m. Greene Jun^r Son of the late Hon^{ble}
 William Greene Esq^r Deceased and Catharine
 Ray Daughter of Capt^r Simon Ray late of
 New Haven, cleaved this 30th day of Aprill
 A.D. 1758*
Edward Sands Ward,
Required Debt due the 30th day
A.D. 1758 By J^r. Dyer Clerk

FIG. 4. Marriage record of William Greene to Catharine Ray, April 30, 1758. Original record in the City Hall, Warwick, R. I.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO CATHARINE (RAY)
 GREENE AT WARWICK³

My dear Friend. Philada Nov 25th 1762.

I received your kind congratulations on my return, & thank you cordially. It gives me great pleasure to hear you are married and live happily. You are a good Girl for complying with so essential a duty & God will bless you. Make my compliments acceptable to your Spouse; and fulfil your promise of writing to me; and let me know everything that has happened to you and your friends since my Departure, for I interest myself as much

as ever in whatever relates to your Happiness. My best
Respects to your Brother & Sister Ward, & Compliments
on his advancement to the Government of your Colony;
and believe me ever, My dear Caty

Your affectionate Friend
& humble servant

B Franklin

My wife & Daughter
join in presenting
their Respects

In her letter of December 20, 1762, Caty had extended to Franklin a cordial invitation to visit the Greenes at Warwick when he came to New England. Franklin thanked her for the invitation and continued that he would call on the Greenes when he was in their vicinity. With a touch of typical Franklin humor he congratulated her on the expected birth of a child. However, there is no record of the birth of any such child in the book of Births, Marriages and Deaths at the Warwick City Hall.

FIG 5 Fireplace on the west side of the "Fire Room" in the Greene home-
stead, Warwick, Rhode Island Coll R I Hist Soc

The "Fire Room" is eighteen by fourteen feet and seven feet eight inches high, the adjoining bedroom is nine feet wide above are two rooms of corresponding size and a chamber in the attic. The fireplace is ten feet, four inches wide at the front, seven feet, nine inches at the back and four feet, five inches deep, with a bee-hive oven on the north. At the top of the opening of the fireplace, five feet six inches from the floor, is a beam sixteen inches square, faced with a finished oak plank of later date. The top of the chimney is pilastered.

The oak frame is cased in, but it conforms to the usual Rhode Island pattern, i.e., it is composed of oak sills, posts girts with a summer beam, the heavy beam which runs at right angles across the room from the chimney-girt to the end-girt and carries the joists of the floor above. The frame is mortised, tenoned, and secured with wooden pins, the walls are composed of oak boards nailed vertically to the heavy frame from sill to plate. "This style of boarding," wrote Norman M. Isham, "for the sides of buildings, or at least of houses, was never abandoned in Rhode Island in colonial times."² The boarding was protected on the outside by clapboards. The original windows were small, about two feet square, the sash of diamond frames set in lead calmes have long since given way to progress. The flooring is of native pine boards, some of remarkable width, fastened to the joists with five inch hand made nails.

In the addition of 1758 is the south-west parlor, fifteen feet, six inches square with a small fireplace surmounted by a pine panel thirty by fifty-six inches. The stud is nine feet and the bolection moulding is hand carved. Between the new and old parts of the house, on the south side of the chimney, is a small hall with a steep stairway leading at right angles to the second floor.

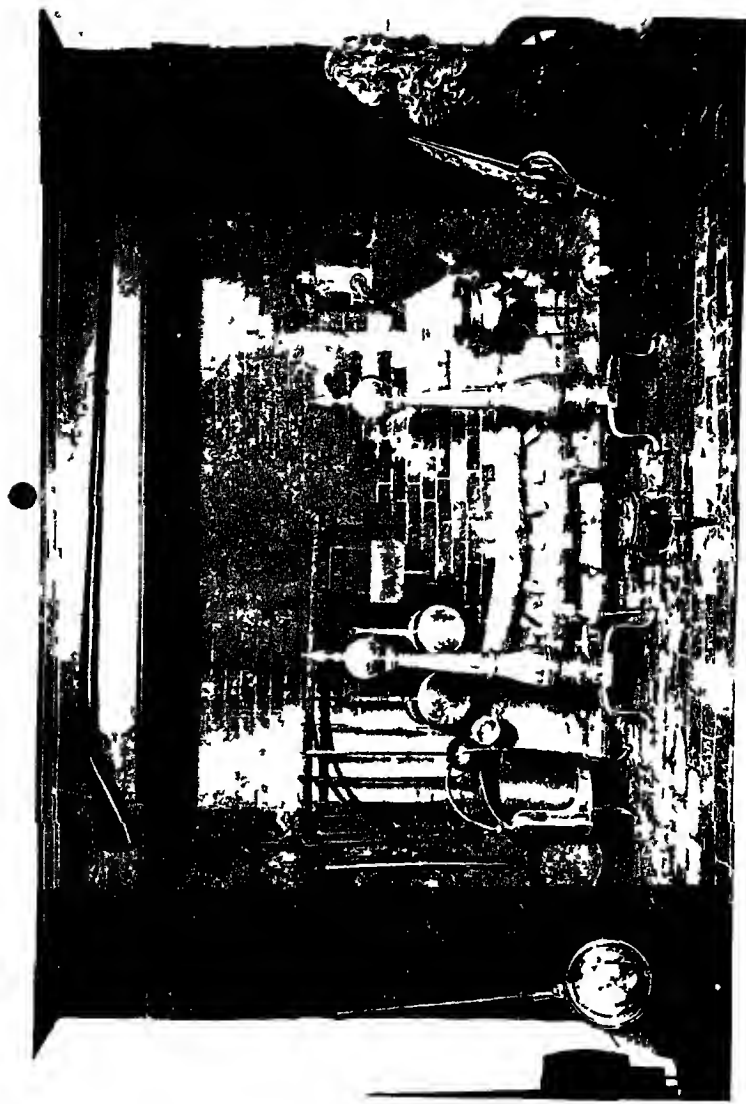


Fig. 5



FIG. 6. Iron medallion of Franklin, hanging over the fireplace in the Greene homestead. Coll. of the editor.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO CATHARINE (RAY)
GREENE AT WARWICK⁴

Philad Jan'y 23. 1763

I received with great Pleasure my dear Friend's Favour of Decem. 20. as it inform'd me that you and yours are all well.

Mrs Franklin admits of your Apology for dropping the Correspondence with her, and allows your Reasons to be good; but hopes when you have more Leisure it may be renew'd. She joins with me in congratulating you on your present happy Situation. She bids me say, she supposes you proceeded regularly in your Arithmetick and that, before you got into *Multiplication*, you learnt *Addition*, in which you must often have had Occasion to say, *One that I CARRY, and two, makes Three*.—And now I have writ this, she bids me scratch it out again. I am loth to deface my Letter, so e'en let it [stand.]

I thank you for your kind Invitation. I purpose a Journey into New England in the Spring or Summer coming. I shall not fail to pay my Respects to you & Mr Greene when I come your Way. Please to make my Compliments acceptable to him.—

I have had a most agreeable time of it in Europe; have in company with my Son, been in most Parts of England, Scotland, Flanders and Holland; and generally have enjoy'd a good Share of Health.—If you had ask'd the rest of your Questions, I could more easily have made this Letter longer. Let me have them in your next.—I think I am not much alter'd; at least my Esteem & Regard for my Katy, (if I may still be permitted [to] call her so) is the same, and I believe will be unalterable, whilst

I am, [etc.]

B Franklin

My best Respects to your
good Brother & Sister Ward.
My Daughter presents her Compliments.
My Son is not yet arriv'd.

Before leaving Philadelphia, Franklin wrote Caty that he looked forward to the pleasure of seeing her in her home, happily married and surrounded by her children. He accepted the Greenes' congratulations on the appointment of his son, William Franklin, as Governor of New Jersey and his marriage, September 2, 1762, to Elizabeth Downes. As usual he had a kind remembrance for Samuel Ward, who had been defeated by Stephen Hopkins in his campaign for reelection in May, 1763.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO CATHARINE (RAY)
GREENE AT WARWICK⁵

Philada June 6th 1763.

Dear Katy

On my return from Virginia lately, I found your agreeable Favour of April 24. by which I had the pleasure of learning that you and Mr Greene and your little ones were well—Your invitation is extremely obliging, and certainly I could not have forgiven myself if I had passed through New England without calling to see you, and enjoying the pleasure of finding you in the happy situation I used to wish for you & advise you to.—You desire to know the time I expect to be your way. In so long a Journey one cannot be exact to a day or a week. I can only tell you that I purpose setting out to-morrow, and having business to do & friends to see in several places, I suppose it may be near the End of the month before I reach your Government.—My Thanks to Mr Green and you for your kind congratulations on my sons promotion & Marriage. All Happiness attend you both, in which good wish my wife joins, & my children would

join if they were here, but they were all in the Jerseys. I am as ever, Dear Katy, with the sincerest Esteem

Your affectionate Friend
& humble servant
B Franklin.

My respects to your late Governour [Samuel Ward] and his lady, your good sister, ask him whether he does not find (as General Shirley told me when superseded by Lord Loudon) that he found the low seat the easiest.

Franklin left Philadelphia in mid-April on a tour of inspection and regulation of the post offices, which took him from Virginia to New Hampshire; he traveled sixteen hundred miles before his return in November. He began the tour by passing several delightful weeks in Virginia, returning to Philadelphia about the first of June. He then continued north and by the tenth was with his partner and friend, James Parker, at Woodbridge, New Jersey, on his way to New England. At the end of the month he was joined in New York by his daughter Sally "then a blooming lass of eighteen, grandly beautiful, and all vivacity and good humor."⁶

They traveled in a light carriage, which Franklin drove himself, and they took turns in riding the accompanying saddle horse. During the journey to Warwick, Franklin, an indifferent horseman, had a fall from his horse, which so lamed his shoulder that he could not hold the reins. He suffered much pain, and Caty tenderly nursed him.

When the Franklins left Warwick, the Greenes escorted them a part of the way to Providence. From there Franklin wrote a thank-you letter to William Greene for his hospitality, and added that it was his intention to go on to Wrentham in order to get into Boston in good season the next day. Perhaps the Franklins patronized the Inn established at Wrentham by David Man in 1724, which enjoyed a splendid reputation. Captain Thomas Fry to whom Franklin sent his compliments in the

letter was the husband of William Greene's sister Mary and son of Thomas Fry, formerly Speaker of the House and Deputy Governor of Rhode Island.

FRANKLIN AT PROVIDENCE TO WILLIAM GREENE
AT WARWICK⁷

Providence, July 19, 1763.

Dear Sir,

From the very hospitable and kind treatment we met with at your house, I must think it will be agreeable to you to hear, that your guests got well in before the rain. We hope that you and Mrs. Greene were likewise safe at home before night, and found all well. We all join in the most cordial thanks and best wishes, and shall be glad on every occasion to hear of the welfare of you and yours. I beg you will present our compliments to your good neighbour, Captain Fry, and tell him we shall always retain a grateful remembrance of his civilities.

The soreness in my breast seems to diminish hourly. To rest and temperance I ascribe it chiefly, though the bleeding had doubtless some share in the effect. We purpose setting out to go to Wrentham this afternoon, in order to make an easy day's journey into Boston to-morrow. Present our respects to Mrs. Ray, and believe me, with much esteem, dear Sir, your obliged and most obedient, humble servant,

B. Franklin.

The *Boston Evening-Post* of Monday, July 25, 1763, reported: "Late Wednesday Afternoon [July 20], Benjamin Franklin and John Foxcroft, Esqus. Joint Post-Masters General for North America, arrived in Town from Philadelphia."

From Jane Mecom's house on Hanover Street, Boston, Franklin wrote to thank Caty herself, to report on his recovery, and to pay his compliments to her other guests. Caty was fond of

company, and, on the occasion of the visit by the Franklins, Henry Marchant and one of the unmarried sisters of Samuel Ward were also staying with the Greenes. Henry was the son of Captain Huxford Marchant, who in 1746 had taken for his second wife Isabel Ward, sister of Samuel. Henry Marchant, only twenty-two at this time, later attained great prominence at the bar, serving as Attorney General for the Colony of Rhode Island, 1771-1777, and later as a member of the Continental Congress. In 1771 he traveled in company with Franklin through Scotland and kept a diary of his journey.

Peter, Franklin's brother, had long made his headquarters at Newport, but when he died in July, 1766, he was Postmaster of Philadelphia. Franklin may have discussed this appointment with Peter at this time. From the context of Franklin's letter it is possible to deduce that Peter had accompanied his brother Benjamin to Warwick and thence to Boston, returning to Newport from there.

FRANKLIN AT BOSTON TO CATHARINE (RAY)
GREENE AT WARWICK⁸

Boston, Augt 1. 1763—

Dear Friend,

I ought to acquaint you that I feel myself growing daily firmer & freer from the Effects of my Fall; and hope a few Days more will make me quite forget it. I shall however never forget the Kindness I met with at your House on that Occasion.

Make my Compliments acceptable to your M^r Greene, and let him know that I acknowledge the Receipt of his obliging Letter and thank him for it. It gave me great Pleasure to hear you got home before the Rain.

My Compliments too to M^r Merchant and Miss Ward if they are still with you; and kiss the Babies for me. Sally says, & *for me too*:—She adds her best Respects to M^r Greene & you, and that she could have spent a Week

with you with great Pleasure, if I had not hurried her away.

My Brother is return'd to Rhodeisland. Sister Mecom thanks you for your kind remembrance of her & presents her Respects.

With perfect Esteem & Regard, I am,

Dear Katy (I can't yet alter my Stile to Madam)

Your affectionate Friend

B Franklin

Franklin extended his official visits to the post offices as far north as Portsmouth, New Hampshire. On his return to Boston he found awaiting him a letter from Caty telling him, among other family news, that her fourteen-months-old daughter Celia was able to walk alone. The family were all well including her mother, Mrs. Ray, who was seventy-four. In his reply Franklin confessed that he had put his shoulder out in another fall from his horse, an injury from which he did not recover for several months.

FRANKLIN AT BOSTON TO CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE
AT WARWICK⁹

Boston, Sept. 5. 1763—

Dear Friend,

On my returning hither from Portsmouth, I find your obliging Favour of the 18th past, for which I thank you.

I am almost asham'd to tell you that I have had another Fall, & put my Shoulder out. It is well reduc'd again, but is still affected with constant tho' not very accute Pain. I am not yet able to travel rough Roads, and must lie by a While, as I can neither hold Reins nor Whip with my right hand till it grows stronger.

Do you think after this, that even your kindest Invitations & Mr Green's, can prevail with me to venture

my self again on such Roads?—and yet it would be a great Pleasure to me to see you & yours once more.

Sally & my Sister Mecom thank you for your Remembrance of them, and present their affectionate Regards—

My best Respects to good Mr Greene, Mrs Ray, & Love to your little ones. I am glad to hear they are well, & that your Celia goes alone. I am, Dear Friend

Yours affectionately

B Franklin

Upon his return to Philadelphia, November 5, Franklin wrote his sister Jane Mecom an account of his journey home. This letter is particularly interesting because it is the only one which gives one of the itineraries he followed on his many journeys between Philadelphia and Boston. It confirms the supposition that he was always a welcome guest at the homes of his many friends, although, because of travel conditions, he was never able to tell them when he might arrive.

Friday was passed at Caty Greene's at Warwick before going to Newport for the week-end. Continuing their journey on Tuesday the Franklins went across lower Narragansett Bay by the ferries and on to Westerly, where they stayed two days with Dr. Joshua Babcock. It was probably on this visit that Franklin arranged to appoint Dr. Babcock postmaster, since *The Table of Post Offices*, published in 1765 by B. Franklin and J. Foxcroft, lists the Westerly post office.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO JANE (FRANKLIN)
MECOM AT BOSTON¹⁰

Philada Nov.7. 1763

Dear Sister

We stopt one Day at Mrs Green's, and got to Newport the Saturday Evening after we left you, staid there till Tuesday Afternoon, got to Dr Babcock's on Wednesday, staid there till Friday, then went to New London, where

we staid among our Friends till Tuesday, then set out for New haven, where we arriv'd on Thursday Morning, set out from thence on Friday Afternoon, & got to New York on Monday following, and after staying one Day there, one at Woodbridge with Mr Parker, & one at Burlington with Billy who met us 20 Miles on the Road, we got safe home on Saturday Night the 5th Instant, having had a most pleasant Journey without the least ill Accident, and found all well: Thanks to God.—

Sally joins in Love to all Friends, and will write if she is not too much interrupted by visiting Friends. I am

Your affectionate Brother
B Franklin

Five days after his return to Philadelphia Franklin wrote to Caty of his safe arrival following a pleasant and uneventful trip. His daughter Sally joined him in thanks to the Greenses for their kind hospitality. Franklin's last sentence refers to an appointment to the post office of Rufus Greene, brother of Nathanael, whose twenty-one-year-old son was destined to become the Revolutionary general.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO CATHARINE (RAY)
GREENE AT WARWICK¹¹

Philad., 10 Nov. [1763]

Dear Katy

I should ask Mr Greene's Permission now to call you so, which I hope he will give me, making Allowance for the Strength of old Habits. — This is to acquaint you & him that your Guests, after a very pleasant Journey, got well home on the 5th Instant, without the least ill Accident, and had the additional Happiness of finding their Friends all well. Mr Green's Good nature & yours, will be pleas'd to hear this, and therefore I take the first Opportunity of writing it. — Sally joins me in Thanks to you both, for all

your kindness to us, and in best Wishes of Prosperity to you & yours.—Please to acquaint Mr Rufus Green that I shall write to him pr next Post. I am, Dear Friend

Yours affectionately
B Franklin

On his return from the North Franklin had learned that James Hamilton had resigned as Governor of Pennsylvania and that John Penn had been sent out to take his place. This appointment was assumed to be conciliatory, but it soon developed that Penn was determined to provoke a quarrel with Pennsylvania. About the same time the General Assembly learned of George Grenville's intention to impose a stamp tax. Franklin was elected agent of the Assembly to present a petition to the King. He immediately began to prepare for his departure for England, and in that atmosphere he wrote to Caty offering his condolences on the death of her mother Mrs Deborah (Greene) Ray, December 11, 1763. He mentioned Sally's enjoyment of their long tour and her gratitude for the kindnesses of their friends everywhere, "and particularly at your House." He referred again to a post office appointment for Mr. Rufus Greene, mentioned in the last letter.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO CATHARINE (RAY)
GREENE AT GREENWICH¹²

Philad Feb. 15. 1764

Dear Friend,

I have before me your most acceptable Favour of Dec. 24. — Publick Business and our public Confusions have so taken up my Attention, that I suspect I did not answer it when I receiv'd it, but am really not certain; so to make sure, I write this Line to acknowledge the Receiving it, and to thank you for it.—

I condole with you on the Death of the good old Lady your Mother. Separations of this kind from those we love, are grievous: But tis the Will of God that such should be the Nature of Things in this World;—all that ever were born are either dead or must die. It becomes us to submit, and to comfort our selves with the Hope of a better Life & more happy Meeting hereafter.—

Sally kept to her Horse the greatest Part of the Journey, and was much pleas'd with the Tour. She often remembers with Pleasure & Gratitude the Kindnesses she met with & receiv'd from our Friends every where, and particularly at your House.— She talks of writing by this Post; & my Dame sends her Love to you, & Thanks for the Care you took of her old Man, but having bad Spectacles, cannot write at present. Mr Kent's¹³ Compliment is a very extraordinary one, as he was oblig'd to kill himself and two others in order to make it:—but being kill'd in Imagination only, they & he are all yet alive & Well, Thanks to God, and I hope will continue so as long as

Dear Katy,

Your affectionate Friend

B Franklin

My best Respects to
Mr Greene, & Love to the
little dear Creatures.—

I believe the Instructions
relating to the Post Office have
been sent to Mr Rufus Greene—

Sally Franklin evidently wrote Caty a thank-you letter in February, 1764, as her father had said she intended to do, but the letter and some small books she sent to Caty's children were not acknowledged. She wrote again in June to ask whether her February letter had been received.

SALLY FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO CATHARINE
(RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK¹⁴

Philadelphia June 14.
1764

Dear Madam

I did myself the pleasure of writing to you in february last and sent my compliments to the young ladys with some littel Books. and desired to know how you all did I should be glad to know weather you received my letter

Papa & Mamma join in love
and Compliments to Mr Green & self with dear

Madam your Very Afectionate Friend

Sally Franklin

The end of November, 1764, found Franklin again on his way to London in the service of Pennsylvania. The General Assembly, May 14, by a large majority had adopted a resolution (which Franklin had drawn) to petition the King to convert Pennsylvania from a Proprietary to a Crown colony and thus do away with control by the Penn family, which had been the cause of so much friction. Over the protest of the Proprietary Party Franklin had been elected agent to go to London and with the aid of Richard Jackson to present the petition, at the same time conveying to the ministry the Assembly's opposition to the Stamp Act. Franklin expected to return as soon as the business was completed, but he remained for eleven years, arriving home May 5, 1775. For this long period only one scrap of correspondence has been discovered.

Franklin was in the habit of making copies in books of some of his letters. Part of a letter to Caty is in such a book at the American Philosophical Society in between letters dated "London, Jan. 13, 1772." In it Franklin told Caty of a new way to make cheese. She had shown an interest in this subject from the earliest days of their friendship and had sent him several cheeses made by her own hands, which he particularly appreciated. The recipe for making cheese from skimmed milk, which Franklin

enclosed, would have been of the greatest interest to her as a farmer's wife, particularly as cheese was the best money crop of the Rhode Island farmer. Franklin suggested (but crossed it out) that through the manufacture of cheese from this recipe Rhode Island might become famous. He knew, of course, that cheese was one of the few products which the Colony could export in quantity. There was therefore, real merit in this apparently frivolous suggestion.

FRANKLIN [AT LONDON TO CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE
AT WARWICK]¹⁵

I send you a Copy of the Receipt, hoping that you may be a means of introducing so valuable a Manufacture into your Country; ~~& that thro' you, Rhodeisland may become as famous.~~ the more valuable, as the Cream is saved, & thence the Farm affords more Butter; at the same time that the Cheese is of so much greater Value.—The principal Cause of its Goodness is perhaps the Heating of the Milk, which I understand is not usual in our Method. After ~~a few~~ some Experiments I think you will succeed in it. ~~You~~ Remember not to be discouraged by a few Disappointments at the Beginning.—I send you a Piece of right Parmesan, that you may be acquainted with it, and know when you have hit it. —

Present my respectful Compliments to Mr Greene, and kiss the Girls for me. My best Wishes attend you all. Believe me ever

Your affectionate Friend

B Franklin

If Caty and Franklin were in correspondence during this period, as the fragment indicates, there is every reason to believe that she would have written him of the approaching marriage of her niece Catharine Littlefield to Nathanael Greene of Coventry and Potowomut, R. I.

Nathanael Greene and his five brothers operated two forges, one at Coventry, Rhode Island, and the other at Potowomut, under the name of Jacob Greene & Company. In 1770 Nathanael built a house and took up his residence at Coventry. His business frequently took him to Potowomut, and the road he traveled led past the Governor Greene mansion presided over by Caty Greene, only ten years his senior. Nathanael formed the habit *of stopping in to visit Caty, and they became fast friends. Caty's* nephew, Samuel Ward, Jr., a student at Rhode Island College, was also a frequent visitor. Nathanael paid court to Sam's sister Nancy, but she would have none of him. After her niece Catherine (Kitty) Littlefield took up her abode at Caty's, Nathanael began to call more frequently. He found Kitty charming, and shortly he wrote to his friend Sam:

NATHANAEL GREENE AT COVENTRY TO SAMUEL
WARD, JR. AT WESTERLY¹⁶

Coventry July 10 1774

Friend Samuel

Please to deliver the inclosed Cards to your Sisters — on the 20th this Instant I expect to be married to Miss Kitty Littlefield at your Uncle Greens, as a Relation of hers and a friend of mine, your company is desired upon the Occasion, The company will be small consisting only of a few Choice Spirits — As she is not married at her fathers house she declined giving any an invitation but a few of her nearest relations and most intimate friends — There will be my brothers & their Wives, Mr Varnum & his Wife Polly Green Phebe Shieffield, & — Betsy Greene — Christopher Greene & Griffin Greene & their Wives — and who from Block Island I dont know, and, Mr Thomas Arnold, these are all excepting your family — Your uncle Hubbard, & Aunt & your Aunt Green was up here Yesterday, both your Aunts seems to be in a declining way — 'tho I think they are rather better than

they have been sometime past — Your Daddy is appointed one to Attend the Congress, for which I rejoice, as the mean motives of Interest, or Partial distinction of Ministers of State will have no influence upon his Virtuous Soul, like Cato of old hee'l stand or fall with the Liberties of his Country . . .

I am just going to meeting therefore must conclude, they were all well at Potowomut, make my Complements agreeable to all the family, my regards in particular to your Sister Hannah, and believe me to be your sincere friend

Nath Greene

Nathanael Greene and Catharine Littlefield were married by Elder John Gorton, July 20, 1774, in the southwest parlor of Judge William Greene's homestead. The "card" in Nathanael's handwriting which he sent to invite his cousin Polly (Mary) Greene to the wedding still hangs on the wall of the room where the ceremony took place. The invitation reads:

Nathanael Greene } Presents his compliments
 to Polly Littlefield } and desires the favor of her
 presence at his wedding, the 20th of July
 Instant at 10 o'clock A.M.

Another event about which Caty might have written Franklin was her baptism by the Reverend Dr. Ezra Stiles. Although she was then forty-three years old, she had never been baptized and suffered doubts of the validity of infant or paedobaptism compared with adult baptism. Her doubts were resolved by the arguments of Dr. Stiles. She made a public profession of faith and a solemn covenant with God, and Dr. Stiles baptized her by affusion at the Court House in East Greenwich on the

morning of July 27, 1774.¹⁷ It would be more than interesting to know how she came to do this.

It is very unfortunate that no letters from Caty to Franklin have been found giving an account of Kitty Littlefield's wedding to Nathanael Greene, a joyous occasion, nor of Caty's baptism, a solemn one. Both events were subjects particularly suited to Caty's graphic style of writing, and the record would be richer with them.

1. Smyth, *Writings* III: 440

2. Isham, Norman M., and Albert F. Brown, *Early Rhode Island houses*, 75-80, Providence, Preston and Rounds, 1895.

3. Franklin, Phila., Nov. 25, 1762, to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick.*

4. Franklin, Phila., Jan. 23, 1763, to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick.

5. Franklin, Phila., June 6, 1763, to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick.*

6. Parton, James, *Life and times of Benjamin Franklin* I: 436, Boston, Ticknor and Fields, 1867.

7. Franklin, Providence, July 19, 1763, to William Greene at Warwick. Smyth, *Writings* IV: 205.

8. Franklin, Boston, Aug. 1, 1763, to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick.

9. Franklin, Boston, Sept. 5, 1763, to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick.

10. Franklin, Phila., Nov. 7, 1763, to Jane Mecom at Boston.

11. Franklin, Phila., Nov. 10, [1763], to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick.

12. Franklin, Phila., Feb. 15, 1764, to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Greenwich.

13. It has not been possible to identify "Mr. Kent."

14. Sally Franklin, Phila., June 14, 1764, to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick.

15. Franklin, [London, Jan. 13, 1772, to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick.]

16. Nathanael Greene, Coventry, July 10, 1774, to Samuel Ward, Jr. at Westerly. Nathanael Greene Letters, R. I. Hist. Soc.

17. Stiles, Ezra, *Literary diary*, Franklin B. Dexter, ed., I: 451-452, N. Y., Scribners, 1901.

* Copies.

III. The Eve of Independence

1775 - 1776

WHEN Franklin sailed for England in November, 1764, he expected to return to America within a year; it turned out that he remained there for eleven years, until the spring of 1775. In 1764 he represented the Colony of Pennsylvania as agent in one particular matter; by 1775 he was the general colonial agent for Pennsylvania, and for Georgia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts as well. With each passing year it seemed to the ministry that he became more and more a general agent representing all the colonies, whose relations with the mother country meanwhile were steadily deteriorating. Van Doren has written that the feelings of the ministry towards Franklin "were both irritation and boredom. . . . Irritating as it was for unphilosophical British politicians to listen to distant Americans who, it must have seemed, could find philosophical excuses even for riots, it was still more irritating to have an American philosopher almost at court, almost an ambassador. There might be temporary quiet overseas, but there was never any relief from Franklin. Touch American interests at any point, and he was instantly aware and active."¹

Because of these feelings the ministry had sought for some time to find an excuse to get rid of him. The publication of the letters from Governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts written to an unidentified member of Parliament provided the occasion for his dismissal. Franklin was haled before the Privy Council, where Solicitor General Alexander Wedderburn insulted him by calling him a thief and accused him of stealing the letters. The next day Franklin was removed from his position as Deputy Postmaster General. Left with no official connection with the government, he nevertheless tarried a while longer in London vainly seeking some means of preventing a break between Great Britain and the

colonies. Satisfied at last that his usefulness in London was at an end, Franklin sailed for home March 21, 1775.

He landed at Philadelphia May 5 to learn of the fighting at Lexington and Concord, events which converted him into an ardent patriot. The next morning he was elected to the Second Continental Congress, which convened at Philadelphia four days later. When the Congress organized, he was made a member of ten or more committees although he was sixty-nine, much older than the average member.

After the battles of Lexington and Concord and the beginning of the siege of Boston, Jane Mecom, like many another resident of Boston, packed her household goods with the intention of fleeing, though she had no idea where to go. This question was resolved when she received an invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Greene, through Mrs. Elizabeth (Hubbard) Partridge, to make them an unlimited visit at Warwick. Jane gladly accepted and on her way through Providence learned of Franklin's safe arrival at Philadelphia. The Greene family at that time consisted of William Greene, Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, and Catharine, his wife, now a middle-aged matron of forty-four, and five children. The eldest was Phebe, fifteen, and the youngest Anne, not yet a year old. Ray, ten years old, became an immediate favorite with Jane Mecom and six months later formed a life-time friendship with the elderly Franklin.

Thus there were seven members of the Greene family occupying an eight-room house; yet such was their hospitality that they took in sixteen refugees from the Cornhill neighborhood of Boston! These included Deborah (Hubbard) Gooch, wife of young William Gooch, who was the daughter of Caty's sister Judith (Ray) Hubbard, and Mrs. Partridge, her sister-in-law.

A few days after her arrival at Warwick on May 14, Jane wrote her brother a long letter. She told him of "the comotion the Town [Boston] was in after the batle [Lexington and Concord] ceas'd . . ." and of the difficulty of escaping because General Gage had closed the gates.

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AND CATHARINE (RAY)
GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN AT
PHILADELPHIA²

... but throw the Goodnes of God I am at last Got Saif Hear & kindly Recved by Mr Green & His wife (who to my grate comfort when I had got Pac't up what I Expected to have liberty to carey out intending to Seek my fourtune with hundred others not knowing whither) Sent me an Invitation in a leter to Mrs Patridg of which I gladly accepted an the day I arived at Providence had the unspeakable Pleasure of hearing my Dear Brother was Saif arived at His own home, Blessed be God for all His mercys to me an unworthy Creature, these People [the Greenes] Seem formed for Hospitality Apear to be Pleas'd with the vast Addition to there famely which consists of old Mr Gough [Gooch] & wife, there Sons wife & negro boy, Mr Thomas Leverett's wife 2 Children & a made, my Self an Grand Daughter [Jane Flagg] who I could not leve if I had it would have been her Death, & they Expect this Day 3 more of Mr Leveretts chill,ⁿ young Mr Gouge, Suckey [Susannah Hubbard] & Mrs Pateridg & Daughter. & Seem as tho there harts were open to all the world. . . .

Mrs. Mecom added a postscript to her letter:

Dear Brother I am tould you will be joynd to the Congress & that they will Remove to conetecut [Connecticut] will you Permit me to come & See you there Mrs Green Says She will go with me

And Caty filled out the page:

My Dear Dear Friend

Welcom a Hundred times Welcom to our once happy Land, Are you in Health and allow me to ask you the old question over a gain if you are the Same good old Soul

you used to be your arrival gives New Springs to all [I] have heard mention it When Shall We See you here do let it be as Soon as the Congress is adjournd or dont know but your good Sister and Self Shall mount our old Naggs and Come and See you Mr Greene would Send Plenty of love if at home we are all well hope you found all that is Dear to you So. We Receivd your favors by Mr Marchant many thanks to you for them this is but the fore runner of a longer letter

from your affectionate
Real Friend
Caty Greene

When Franklin learned that Boston was being besieged, he became concerned for his sister's safety. John Adams relieved his anxiety by telling him that Jane had fled to Warwick, and Franklin, guessing that she must be at the Greenses, wrote her there. Cousin Jonathan Williams, who took care of Franklin's interests in Boston, was married to Grace Harris, daughter of Franklin's half-sister Anne; their son Jonathan Williams was employed by Franklin as a commercial agent in France after 1777.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO JANE (FRANKLIN)
MECOM AT WARWICK³

Philadelphia, May 26, 1775.

Dear Sister,

I have just now heard by Mr. Adams, that you are come out of Boston, and are at Warwic, in Rhode Island. I suppose it must be at good Mr. and Mrs. Greene's, to whom present my affectionate respects. I write this line just to let you know, that I am returned well from England, and that I found my family well; but have not found the repose I wished for, being the next morning after my arrival delegated to the Congress by our Assembly.

I wish to hear from you, and to know how you have left your affairs in Boston; and whether it would be inconvenient for you to come hither, or you wish rather that I should come to see you, if the business I am engaged in will permit. Let me know if you want any assistance, and what is become of cousin Williams and his family, and other friends. Jonathan was at Paris when I left England, but to return in a week or two. I am ever, my dear sister, your very loving brother,

B. Franklin.

On the day of the battle of Bunker Hill, Franklin had written both to Caty and to Jane. The infant Hercules to whom he referred was William Bache, Sally's two-year-old son. For the first time he mentions his grandson, William Temple Franklin. He was the illegitimate son, then fifteen years old, of William Franklin. Mrs. Mecom had probably never heard of him before, though she was to become very fond of him in the course of the next few months.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO JANE (FRANKLIN)
MECOM AT WARWICK⁴

Philada June 17. 1775.

My dear Sister,

I wrote to you some time since, having heard from one of the Delegates that you were at Warwick, and I supposed it must be with that good Family, so I directed my Letter to you there; I hope you receiv'd it. — I have since received your kind Letter of May 14. with one from dear Mrs Green. I sympathise most sincerely with you and the People of my native Town & Country. Your Account of the Distresses attending their Removal affects me greatly. I desired you to let me know if you wanted any thing, but have not since heard from you. I think so many People must be a great Burthen to that hospitable

House; and I wish you to be other wise provided for as soon as possible, and I wish for the Pleasure of your Company, but I know not how long we may be allowed to continue in Quiet here if I stay here, nor how soon I may be ordered from hence; nor how convenient or inconvenient it may be for you to come hither, leaving your Goods as I suppose you have in Boston. My Son tells me he has invited you to Amboy. Perhaps that may be a Retreat less liable to Disturbance than this: God only knows, but you must judge. Let me know however if I can render you any Service; and in what way. — You know it will give me Pleasure. — I hear the Cousin Williams is at last got out with his Family: — I shall be glad to hear from them, and would write if I knew where they were. I receiv'd the other Day here, a Letter I wrote to you from London the 20th of February. It had been to New England, and I suppose your being not found there, occasion'd its being forwarded to me. I am, Thanks to God, very hearty and well, as is this whole Family. The youngest Boy is the strongest and stoutest Child of his Age that I have seen: He seems an Infant Hercules. I brought over a Grandson with me, a fine Lad of about 15. His Father has taken him to Amboy. You will be pleas'd with him when you see him. Jonathan Williams was in France when I left London. Since I have been here I receiv'd a Letter he sent me there: I enclose it for your Amusement; and to show to his Father & Mother, as it may be some Satisfaction to them, if they have not lately heard from him. —

I am ever, my dear Sister,

Your affectionate Brother

B Franklin

In a charming letter Franklin thanked Caty and her husband for their hospitality to his sister and promised that if he came

to New England he would not pass their door without calling on his dear friends.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO CATHARINE (RAY)
GREENE AT WARWICK⁵

Philada June 17th 1775.

My Dear Friend

I received your kind congratulations with infinite pleasure, as I learn by them that you and yours are well. I long much to See once more my Native Country, and my friends there, and none more than my dear Caty and her family. Mr Green I hope will allow an old man of 70 to Say he loves his wife, it is an innocent affection. I have great Obligations to him and you, for your hospitality to my Sister. It is much too long a journey for her who is no good Horsecwoman, and perhaps for you, though you used to ride admirably; Otherwise I should be pleased with the flattering idea you throw out to me, of mounting your nags to make me a visit. If I possibly can find time, I purpose to be in New England this Summer, and you may be assured the *honest old soul* as you call him, will not pass your Door, without indulging himself with the pleasure of calling to see his friends. My love to Mr Green and the Children; and believe me ever, my dear dear Friend

Yours most affectionately
B Franklin.

It took the letters written on June 17 until July 12 to reach Warwick. On July 14 Jane received the letter which Franklin had written May 26, which had been held for three weeks at the Newport post office.

Jane replied immediately, giving her brother a detailed account of her flight from Boston and a full budget of the family news, which he always enjoyed, and Caty added a postscript.

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AND CATHARINE (RAY)
GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PHILADELPHIA⁶

warwick July 14 — 1775

The Concern I knew my Ever Dear Brother would be in to know what was become of me made me take the first opportunity to write to him & twice Since, but did not recve a line from you till the day befor yesterday when I recd yrs of the 17 June & this Day I have recd the first you wrot, it had been Returnd from Cambridg & had lane 3 weeks in Newport office,

your care for me at this time Added to the Innumerable Instances of yr Goodnes to me gives me grat comfort under the Difeculties I feel with others but not in a grater Degree for I am in want of nothing haveing mony Suficent to Saport me Some time if I Should go to board (which however mrs Green will not Consent to) & I have with me most of the things I had to Sell & now & then Sell Som Small mater, . . .

Post-script by Catharine Greene:

My Dear Friend your letter which [I] had the Pleasure of Receiving gave me great Pleasure as it gave me a fresh Proff of your own Dear Self, & being once more on the Same Land with us, your Dear good Sister Grew Very impatient till She heard from you and began to fear you was not Come She was kind enough to Shew me her letter and you are fear full She will be trouble Some but be assurd that her Company Richly Pays as She goes a long and we are Very happy to gether and [I] Shall not Consent to Spare her to any body but her Dear Brother was he to Stay at home and Be Positive but if you are to Journey we must have her for She is my mama and friend and I tell her we are Rich that we have a lot here and another there and have 3 or 4 of them and we Divert one

another Charmingly do Come and See us Certain! dont think of going home a gain Do Set Down and injoy the Remainder of your Days in Peace have Just been enguagd in Something that Prevents my writeing as I designd to have done I hope ne[torn] I write to be more my [torn] kind love to [torn] Mrs Beach and the D[torn] hope your [torn] Sympathiss with you [torn]

[Affec]tionate friend as long as life

Caty Greene

Relieved and reassured that Jane was happy and comfortable with the Greens, Franklin seized the opportunity of Governor Ward's returning from Philadelphia to Rhode Island to send her a few lines. In a postscript he suggested her going to Philadelphia when it was cooler.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO JANE (FRANKLIN)
MECOM AT WARWICK⁷

Philada Aug. 2. 1775

My dear Sister

Last Night I received with great Pleasure your kind Letter of July 14. with the most agreable Addition from Mr & Mrs Green. God bless those two good ones!

The Congress has adjourned this Morning to the 5th of September. I have now upon my Hands the Settling a new General Post Office, and a Treaty to be held with the Indians on the Ohio, besides smaller Businesses, all to be transacted by the time the Congress meets again. Gov^r Ward is just setting out, and I cannot Send this by him if I enlarge. My Love to your Friends, from

Your affectionate Brother

B Franklin

Sally & Mr Bache send their Love
and Duty

I think you had best
come hither as soon as
the Heats are over, i. e
sometime in September. but
more of this in my next.

Superscribed:

To

Mrs Mecom

at

The honble Judge Green's

pr favour of }
Govr Ward. } Warwick

Governor Ward delivered the above letter from Franklin at the Greene Homestead at Warwick, but found that Mrs. Mecom had accompanied Catharine, who was not well, to Worcester, possibly to see the Williams family who had moved there temporarily. Ward wrote Franklin from Providence, August 12, 1775,⁸ about conditions on the Post Road, which he had just traversed from Philadelphia. He made certain recommendations how to route the mail to avoid capture by the British, who were patrolling Long Island Sound and the entrance to Narragansett Bay.

On September 12, the day before the Congress reassembled, Franklin wrote Jonathan Williams:

I have lately heard from your Father. He has made a temporary exchange of Houses and Furniture with a Mr. Putnam of Worcester, who now resides at your House in Boston, and your Family at his House in Worcester where they were all well about two Weeks since. My Sister is at Warwick with Mrs. Greene. She left her House lock'd up with the Furniture in it but knows not whether she shall ever see it again.⁹

The Congress, September 30, chose a committee of three, Thomas Lynch of South Carolina, Benjamin Harrison of Virginia, and Franklin, to confer with Washington at Cambridge in regard to the organization and maintenance of the army. The committee left Philadelphia, October 4, and arrived at Headquarters, Cambridge, twelve days later. There Nathanael Greene, Brigadier General in command of the Rhode Island forces, was introduced to Franklin. They had never seen each other before, yet they had so many common ties it must have been like a meeting of old friends! General Greene had married Caty's niece, Catharine Littlefield, in the southwest parlor of Caty's home, the room from which Franklin (according to tradition) admired the westward view on his visit in 1763. Greene was impressed: "I had the honor," he wrote, "to be introduced to that very great man Dr. Franklin, whom I viewed with silent admiration the whole evening. Attention watched his lips, and conviction closed his periods."¹⁰ Franklin wrote his sister on his arrival at Cambridge.

FRANKLIN AT CAMBRIDGE TO JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM
AT WARWICK¹¹

Head Quarters, Camp
at Cambridge, Oct. 16.

1775.—

My dear dear Sister

I arrived here last Night with two other Delegates of the Congress. I suppose we may stay here about a Week. —In order to take you home with me, I purpose quitting their Company, purchasing a Carriage and Horses, and calling for you at good Mrs Greene's. But let me hear from you in the mean time, and acquaint me with any thing you would have me do or get towards the Convenience of our Journey. My Love to that hospitable Family, whom I hope soon to have the Pleasure of seeing. I am ever

Your affectionate Brother

B Franklin

Since the Council of War met on October 18 and continued in session four days, Franklin probably left Cambridge on October 23 and passed through Providence the next day on his way to Warwick. Under date of November 10 Ezra Stiles entered in his diary:

Dr Franklin lately returned from the Army to the Congress. At Providence he was asked whether the Congress were about negotiating with France or a supposed French Legate at Philada? He answd How could such a Thing be before Independency was declared? The Continent are ripening for Independency.¹²

Almost the last day of the month Franklin and his sister, Jane Mecom, accompanied by Caty's ten-year-old son Ray, set out in a carriage for Philadelphia. Some time in the intervening five or six days Caty took Franklin on a visit to her uncle Judge Philip Greene at Occupasuetuxet, the original seat of the Greene family in Warwick.

Leaving Mrs. Greene's toward the end of October, Franklin's carriage followed the well established route west to the Windham road and thence on to Wethersfield and New Haven. From New Haven Franklin wrote to the Greenes, in care of the Wards at Westerly, to report on the progress of the journey to Philadelphia. Both Caty and William replied immediately on receipt of his letter, Caty anticipating that Franklin would be in Philadelphia by November 13. William Greene expressed his gratitude to Franklin for taking his little son Ray with him to Philadelphia. He asked Franklin to advise him about Ray's scholastic ability, promising to give him an education if he was worthy of it, an unusual opportunity for a member of the Greene family.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WESTERLY TO FRANKLIN
AT PHILADELPHIA¹³

My Dear Friend Westerly monday noon
[November 13]

I have Some days Past Plaist you at home happy with your Dear Children and Sister I am not able to find Words

to tell you how Pleasd I am to have our Boy with you I wish he may Deserve Such Goodness God Will Reward you thank you for your Kind letter from Newhaven I Shall write you as Soon as I get home am Just going I write to Ray but the letter is got So Soild would write Another if I was not in Such hast you will excues it the family here all Desire thire love and would been Glad it had been Convenient for you to Calld upon them I am with true affection

your Friend

Caty Greene

did you travill as fast
after you got by Springfield
how does it go on

WILLIAM GREENE AT WESTERLY TO FRANKLIN AT
PHILADELPHIA¹⁴

Westerly Novr 13th 75

Dear Friend

On my Coming here I found your Favor from Newhaven, it gives me great pleasure To hear you was so far on your journey well, hope before this you have Arriv'd safe home. my little son who you have Taken with you how shall I enough express my Gratitude, I was much at a loss what to Doe with him I had three years past a good writing master so that he learn,t Very fast since he has been To an Indifferent school when not Otherways Ingag,d, but he being Very handy to go of Errands and upon the Farm, [so] that he has had Very little Advantages that I really am at a loss—what may be his Genius if he has a Turn for learning shall give it him freely if not I shall be glad of your Advice in regard to his Genius as I have a great Desire that he may be a useful member of Society, his Mamma has wrote him my love to him

your Children & in a perticular manner to Mrs Meacome and except a share of the same from Your Sincear and much Oblig,^d Friend.

Wm Greene

Ten days or so after their arrival at Philadelphia, Jane Mecom in an hitherto unpublished letter gave Caty an entertaining account of their journey. Ray Greene had had a light attack of small pox, but had completely recovered by the end of December. His uncle Samuel Ward wrote to his daughter Catharine (Ward) Greene: "Let your Aunt Greene know that little Ray is vastly well after the small Pox & exceedingly happy. . . ." ¹⁵ Franklin stopped at Governor William Franklin's magnificent house at Perth Amboy. Without knowledge of this letter from Mrs. Mecom it has previously been assumed that the last meeting between Franklin and his son William took place in August. ¹⁶

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AT PHILADELPHIA TO
CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK ¹⁷

Philadelphia Novr 24 1775

My Dear Mrs Greene

Asure yr Self the Epethet of Daughter which you Seem to like to use cannot be Disagreable to me would to God I had Such a won all the Alurements of this Place my Brother Exepted Should not Seperate me from her, I write not this in Disparagement of my own Daughter for She is a good woman but Provedence does not Premit us to be to gather & as to Sons I have nothing but misery in those that are left Boath of them Distracted & I have heard of the Death of Poor Josiah Since I came hear but by what means I am not Informed. God grant I may make a proper Use of all His Dealings with me.

I thank you for yr very kind and perticular leter of the 12 of this month you know it will be allways agreable to

me. I am Sorry you were So Afflicted in yr Juorny to westerly my Seat was Exeding Easey & Journey very Pleasant my Dear Brothers conversation was more than an Equivalent to all the fine wether Emaginable but I mett with won mortification on the Rhoad we had Apointed to Dine at wethersfeald where mrs Hancock is & had considerable talk about it but we being Engaged at that time in other conversation the Postilion Drove a mile or two beyond before we discovered it & I could not prevale with him to go back So we did not Dine till we put up for the Night, I Expected Master Ray would have Given you Som Discription of what he Saw on the Jurny Espeshally at Governer Franklins house which was very magnificient & we Shew him it all over but I percive he did not in his last & He now thinks it not proper as the Small Pox is out on him tho I dont beleve He could Infect any body he has So little we cant number more than ten that I am afraid he will not have won pit for a Receipt he has had no Illnes but won Day a litle Shivery & feverish So much as to Say he was in no hurry for His coffe, we thought it not proper to make his cloaths till we Saw how it would fare with him but now Shall have them made with all Expedition he is very tractable & hear is a young Gentelman who Setts him a Compleat Example of good maners that is Politenes; & my Brother will give Proper Directions about his Scooling He [Ray] will write him Self as Soon as he thinks it Saif. I have not Seen Mr Mumford tho I Desiered yr Brother ward to Ask him to come but I am a going out to look for him & Shall finish my leter when I come back.

Since the Above have rec^d yrs of the 21 & am Glad to find there is won in the world So free from Giult. yr crim was unnoticed that you might have kept yr own Secrit & absolved yr Self. Ill be Ansurable for yr Husband that He Shall not Beat you, Ray Behaves as well as can

be Expected Inded very well. & he will now be able to Injoy himself without fear. I Shall have no use for my Gownd this winter & I dont give my Self the least concern about it. I Dont know that I got Cold with my Jurny but I have had a bad fit of Astme, am now as well as Usal have not had the c-l-k [colic] but do not Sleep well on nights, Mrs Bache is not yet a bed She is as well as can be Expected, I am So happy as to have my Choice of places of worship So near that the wether need not hinder me from going. Remember my kind love to Mr Greene to Dear litle Samey to Mr and Mrs Gouch & yr mother, & respect to all Inquiring friends & beleve me to be yr most faithfull & obliged frind

Jane Mecom

Saterday Decr 2 I have not Seen Mr Mumford Sopose He is Gone to [torn] her Silk till a nother opertunity, Ray is a broad & fine & harty, Mrs. Beach was Last night Deld of a fine Gerl,¹⁸ my Brother Remembers his love to you

Franklin was a member of so many committees that he was occupied from six in the morning till after four in the afternoon. Yet on November 29 he was appointed to the most important of all, the secret committee to correspond with European nations. The heavy burden imposed on him and the resulting depression of his mind might never have been known but for a letter from Caty in which she referred to his low spirits. In it she endeavored to cheer him by reminding him of the happy journey from Boston to Westerly they had made in December, 1754.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PHILADELPHIA¹⁹

Warwick Jany ye 13th [1776]

My Dear Friend

I Some times feel quite Bashfull Scribling a way to you
So much but when troublesom a hint will do but now I

think of it it will Relax you for a moment from hard Study
 how do you do Methinks Rather low Spirited I have every
 letter Sayd or inquired after Ray but Never of you of
 My Dear good Friend your Sister is She not extreem low
 Spirited for her, Dear Lady what Continued Sceines of
 Misfortunes She has waded throw enough to have buried
 Seeverial Such as your friend, Mr Greene is most all the
 while gone but Comes home with a Smile and I Smile
 again is not as that you used to tell me I impute Great
 Part of the happiness of my life to the Pleasing lessons
 you gave me in that Journey for those and all favors
 allow me to Subcribe mySelf

your most obligd friend
 Caty Greene

While the Secret Committee was busy with sending Silas Deane to France, the mind of the public was occupied with affairs in Canada. The assault at Quebec on December 31 had failed; General Montgomery was dead and Arnold wounded; the army was disintegrating under the pressure of hunger, cold, and small-pox. Congress appointed a commission of three to go to Montreal, confer with Arnold, and try to rectify Canadian affairs. The men selected were Franklin, Samuel Chase, and Charles Carroll of Maryland. Carroll's brother John, a Catholic priest, accompanied them. Franklin was over seventy; the others, forty or younger.

This is not the place to relate again the trials which the commissioners underwent on the spring journey. They left New York by boat April 2 and reached Montreal April 29 after literally pushing their way through snow and ice. From General Schuyler's at Saratoga Franklin wrote Josiah Quincy:

I am here on my way to Canada, detained by the present state of the Lakes, in which the unthawed ice obstructs navigation. I begin to apprehend that I have undertaken a fatigue, that, at my time of life, may prove too much for me; so I sit down to write to a few friends by way of farewell.²⁰

On arrival at Montreal, Franklin found the situation was hopeless: the French Canadians were hostile; the American army was without funds and discipline; and on May 6 word came that the British had landed reinforcements at Quebec. Franklin, sick with what he later believed to be a smothered attack of gout, decided to return to New York, where he arrived May 27, accompanied by Father Carroll. From Philadelphia Franklin wrote Washington on June 21 that the gout had kept him from Congress, "so that I know little of what has pass'd there, except that a Declaration of Independence is preparing."²¹

The next three letters from Caty to her "dear Mama," Mrs. Mecom at Philadelphia, reveal Caty's anxiety for Franklin when she learned that he was to journey through the wilderness to Canada. She was a chatty writer, and these letters are filled with the family news on which she and Jane feasted with such relish. Her several references to "Dear Brother" and to "your Relation" are to Franklin.

In the eighteenth century the superscription was usually addressed to the head of the family though the letter itself was intended for some member of the household. Hence this first letter is "inclosed" to Governor Ward, as Caty thought it possible that Franklin might have left for Canada without leaving instructions about his mail.

"Caty Kitt," referred to in the letter, was Catharine Ward, first wife of Christopher Greene. Jenny Flagg was Jane Mecom's granddaughter. Nicholas Cooke was Governor of Rhode Island from 1775 to 1778. His daughter Anna was Mrs. Robert Sterry; Sally was her sister.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO JANE
(FRANKLIN) MECOM AT PHILADELPHIA²²

Febry 7 [1776] I wrote the other day to go by the Post but Caty Kitt sent early in the morning for me to Come down as Soon as Possible [I] feard She was going to be Sick so did not Send My letter She was very Poorly but is got better She sent for Jenny [Flagg] Monday to make her grounds Mrs Sterry Sally Cook Debe [Ward]

& Phebe [Greene] is all gone there to day the ladies came here with their Father [Gov. Nicholas Cooke]

The Genl Assembly is now setting here and who do you think Sleeps in your Bed Why the Govnr I think sometimes Im too particular but you told me to write you all But to tell you how much I love you and how often I think of you and how much I Share in whatever concerns you have not time enough for I am in hopes of geting a treasurers Note for what Money Jenny has taken have the Promise of one at 6 pr Sent I wish you Could get one with what you have got with you unless you can do better with it Mr Gooch Bot them away at N—York and they would Not allow a farthing of interest it would been a fine chance for you I mention this Knowing that Dear Brother has the Nation upon his head & heart We hear this Prusion Nobleman has 200 letters for him [torn] lne from him this many a day I hear he is going Canada I cant bear he Should go over the lake on the Ice I inclose this to Brother Ward for fear he [Franklin] Should be gone and without any instructions Dear Good Soul God preserve him a blessing to this Land his family and friends I am with the highest regard love esteem Duty &c [illegible] My Grey haired Husband & Children and all our old People yours with* affection & esteem

Caty Greene

**the Sow has Pigned & Pigned has the Sow*

Caty liked to have young people around her, and she dearly loved a party. About 1770 her niece "Kitty" Littlefield came to live with her; when it came time for Kitty to marry Nathanael Greene, Caty gave the wedding. There was another wedding at Caty's home when Patience Greene, William Greene's niece, married Welcome Arnold, February 11, 1773. Patience had lived with Caty after her father Samuel was lost at sea. The second letter from Caty to Jane is filled with neighborhood gossip.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO JANE
(FRANKLIN) MECOM AT PHILADELPHIA²³

To

Mrs Jane Mecom

Warwick Febry ye 20th 1776

Philadelphia

I had some days past the pleasure of your favor of Jan ye 5th and wrote at several times it was a fine Cordial to us all for we all began to think what was the Matter and really feared you was sick but your letter went round to Cambridg & New Port which was the reason we did not get them Sooner thank you for Such a lovely long one Poor Mr Willms [Jonathan Williams] and wife do from my heart Pitty them tis a heavey Stroke but have no Doubt but tis ment to them for good I would Readily comply with your Desire in writing to her both to acknowledge the Civilities Shewd me in our visit there and in Boston and to Shew you my Readiness to oblige you in whatever you Should intimate would give you Pleasure but think She has so much Abler Pens that I Should only renew her Grief and not give her the consolation wisht but will think of it and if I find myself easy and an opportunity Presents will. did She ever get that you sent her Cousin Welcome I very often in imagination have a fine Dish of Chat with you especially if anything labors with me I tell you the whole but think how mortifying to not have one Word in answer. My anxieties are all for my friends Allmost What a pleasure it gives me to hear you Speak so pleasingly of Ray I told you often [that I] Pray that he may Continue to Deserve your Regard and all that Know him do Remember me very kindly to your Relations that Shews him [Ray Greene] So much kindness and tell him that if he comes to NewEngland While we live we will love him like our Son—Cousin Billy and Debe is got home Billy Very poorly a violent Cold oblig'd to Stay at Mr Leverits 3 or 4 days before they Could get home but

it has been a fine day to day and they went to Cousin Kitts and have Stayd all night the old people are well & believe are as happy as any out of Boston they often talk of you in love and affection Jenny [Flagg] and Phebe [Greene] went to Spining yesterday week I wrote you to an Irish Woman to get the true airs the next day Jenny had a violent head ache and was very unwell but we Cookt her up and the day after She wanted to go again but we would not let her and the day after She was sent for to Coventry to fit Caty [Catharine (Littlefield) Greene] of to the Camp the Genl has been Very Poorly and Sent for Spoues and it was a fine day and advised her to go and hear Caty is sat of to day Jenny has 2 or 3 gownds to make here besides and think by the time She has done She will be in a hurry to get home We have had another Killing lately our Spring Piggs and Jenny saw the whole process of them She thinks She Shall not love Sasages any more nor has She eat Cheese Since She Saw what the Runnet is made of—they go on old Sort at Mr L— Spot etc [illegible]—Debe and your friends thinks tis done [illegible] to the throw the favorite upon Uncle to Room for a nother Comeing when was they loving enough for that—dont Beat me but it was Brought out that L found him Nothing but his Victuals and that he grudg for his Uncle found all his Cloths he had lately given him Some Shirts and She hird them made becase they Should not be made in his house All this before aunt Debe Im a tell tale you Know but youl Conceit your in your little Chamber for a minuet—Celia [her daughter] has got home from [the Wards at] Westerly they was mightily pleased with her visit indeed they think her none Such Nancy was married before She came away and it will give you pleasure to hear She Seams easy & happy the Capt [Ethan Clarke] Stayd here last night from the Camp Brother Hubbard and I have had a long talk both wept and are

upon a Better footing I forget what else I want to Say
for tis Very late except all our love and very good Night
to you yours

C Greene

Caty's third letter to Jane was addressed to Samuel Ward instead of to Franklin because Caty still feared that he might have already left for Canada. It is filled with family happenings, particularly about Jenny (Jane) Flagg and Nancy Littlefield, who married John Paine of Block Island. She was a sister of Kitty who had married Nathanael Greene.

"Samey and Betsey" must refer to Simon Ray Ward, born October 4, 1760, and Elizabeth Ward, children of Governor Samuel and Anna (Ray) Ward. Their mother had died October 8, 1770. Another son, Samuel Ward, Jr., born November 17, 1756, was a prisoner of war, when Caty was writing, having been taken at the time of the unsuccessful attempt to storm Quebec by Montgomery and Arnold.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO JANE
(FRANKLIN) MECOM AT PHILADELPHIA²⁴

To

Mrs Jane Mecom

Philadelphia

Warwick March 12 [1776]

My Dear Mama

I wrote you last & did not give you that tender Distinction as I was writeing by the fire and would not be interrupted So did not begin it and fagot it afterwards I inclose this to Brother Ward for fear our Dear Brother is gone oh how I Should Rejoice to have you with us in his absence Jenny is gone to Spining I am Sorry that I did not ask her to Shew me her letter as I dont Know what She had Sayd of our family as it is Something larger every particular and every Motive [I] Shall tell you when I have a little more Leisure or Know Whither Brother has a Right to have letters inclosd to him. I

want to tell you all that passes amongst us but nothing will give you more Pleasure than to hear we are all well and that a Perfect Harmony Subsists amongst us and that we are all in Health Jenny a good girl So they are all Nancy Littlefield is here while her Sister is gone Brother Hubbard is gone to See his Sister Betty Gooch Set out for Kinderhook again Samey and Betsey are here but have taken them at a price that there Dada should not think he had no care it is 5/3 per week they are very orderly indead and you cant think what a Relief it is think we was never made to just [live for] ourselves and let the youth and helpless be turned into the wide world farewell my Dear Lady Oh Shall I conclude without mentioning our Dear Boston the Distress is of them there is Poor Jude if alive one of the unhappy but that God who Knows what is best for us will Direct as Shall be Most for his Glory do tell me how your Dear Girls does and if Ray is Clever I am with every Wish for yr happiness

yours affectionately

C Greene.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, when stamps were introduced, postage was commonly paid by the recipient. For this reason Mrs. Mecom feared that Caty had not written her because she might object to paying the postage, even under such extraordinary circumstances as serious illness. She explains that on Caty's order she had sent a large packet to Governor Cooke without an explanation and asks Caty to make an apology for her.

The daughter she speaks of in the following letter is Mrs. Jane (Mecom) Collas, her ninth child, born April 12, 1745. Mrs. Collas and her mother later lived together at Cambridge and Boston, and she appears frequently in the correspondence.

The attack on Philadelphia by the *Roebuck* frightened Jane into a resolve to return immediately to New England. But as there was a lull in the hostilities, she did not leave Philadelphia until just before General Howe entered the city, September 26, 1777.

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AT PHILADELPHIA TO
WILLIAM GREENE AT WARWICK BUT
INTENDED FOR CATY GREENE²⁵

Philadelphia 8th may 1776

My Dear friend

you can,^t Imagin the Anxiety I have been in Since I recved yr last, hearing then of yr famely being So Sick & not a word Since maks me fear Every thing, you can,^t Surely Sopose I Should think any thing of paying postage on any Extroydenary ocation I Sent won large paquet to Governer Cook without a word of Apology you must make it for me for it was by yr order, & I had not time to write a word. I have Sent a nother by yr Brother Wards Servant which I hope you will git Saif & Soon, ansure me quick I besech you by the post, but prehaps I may meet it for there has been a Alaram hear to Day which Almost Determins me to Sett out for NewEngland Directly & if I Should I Shall take Ray with me for He would Brake His hart if I Should Leave Him & I have promised I will not, I cannot hear whither my Daughters Goods are Gone as well as mine but Expect theye are, & I think there is but very litle Chance for her Husband to Escape being taken, She looks on her Self alredy as a Disconsolat widdow Intreets me to promis her I will Return that we may live to gather, what if I Should go & take yt House Mr Leverett had near Provedence do you think we could git a liveing in the way they began I am afraid Boston is not Sufficiently fortified yet. I thought not to tell you the circumstanc of the Alarm as you may hear it as quick & more perfect in the News Papers but I will Just tell you that two Ships the Roebuck & a nother came up the River I forgit how many mils Distant from

the City when a number of armed Gondelos & fier Ships went Down to Ingage them there was Grat fiering all Day till five o clock & there is an Expres come brings News they have Shatered them boath much & Drove the Roebuck on Shore the Same that was Ashore on Sunday week but go off again it is Expected She will be Taken, Ray Desiers me to Remember His Duty love & Respects where it is Due & pleas to Do the Same for your Affectionat friend

Jane Mecom

Samuel Ward died of the small-pox at Philadelphia, March 26, 1776, while a delegate to the Second Continental Congress. Though he had been frequently warned, he refused steadfastly to take the disease by inoculation. On June 21 Caty wrote to Jane about her visit to the bereaved family, her nephews and nieces, at Westerly. She had intended to write from there, but refrained lest the young people should seek to read what she had written. She also disclosed for the first time that Jenny Flagg might be contemplating matrimony, news which she enlarged upon in her next of July 3. Caty made it plain that her regard for Jane did not arise from the intimacy of the summer of 1775, but from their first acquaintance.

James Gooch and his wife had lost all their goods during the British occupation of Boston and were obliged to begin house-keeping all over again like a newly married couple.

Dr. Joshua Babcock had been appointed the first postmaster of Westerly by Franklin at the time of his visit in 1763; Franklin admired him and continued to inquire about him. The Doctor's son, Henry, colonel of the Second Rhode Island Regiment, was dismissed from his command in May, 1776, because it "incontestibly appeared" to the General Assembly that he was "at times deprived of the perfect use of his reason."²⁸

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO JANE
(FRANKLIN) MECOM AT PHILADELPHIA²⁷

To Mrs Jane Mecom Philadelphia
favord by

Welcome Arnold Esq. Warwick June ye 21st 1776

My Dear Mama

I have got largely in your debt — 4 letters 3 of them Received Near together — have been to Visit that Bereaved family at Westerly a fortnight where I promist MySelf to write you but thought I should want to write what if they Should ask to See Could not Deny and what I Should not Choose they Should See and there Receivd your favor Subcribed by that much lovd hand your other Self we much Rejoice to hear of his Safe Return hope by this his Health is Restord Pray God long to Preserve him a Blessing to our land Mine with Mr Greenes and the Childrens most affectionate Regards to him Mr Greene goes to Providence this morning or would write him—Your favor after your fright of the Ships in the River I lookt on as wrote in that fright wherein you Mention that house of Mrs Leverits it is so far out of town and from all your acquaintance that I Should by no means Consent to your going there You would not care to have the trouble of a horse and it would be expensive hireing and your Business would be Cheifly in town If you do leave your Dear Brother I Shall think my Self happy to have you live with me My Regard for you is not of a Summers but from our first acquaintance—I dont Know but Jenny will be Provided for after a While by Somebody els I was askt by his Brother if Spoues and my Self had been consulted I told him No but thought it was a Civility Due and any want of Respect to her Should Resent as soon as our

own Children — you may Depend the Girls Dont tease her other ways than is agreeable in this Case we will forgive her as it was her notion to find your Sentiments. Id a letter last night from Uncle Gooch they had a fine time home but have left some of their things that they are obliged to Buy they say like young housekeepers they Must get one thing at a time they Say they have Particularly inquired after your things and Some are in one place and Some in Another but that you must have Neighbours and Loose Some, I Lodgd one Night at Doctor Babcocks he is from home but She Sent his kind love to you & Brother they have a great trial with Harry²⁸

I Know your anxxious to hear of the afflicted family of Brother Ward, they are well and as happy as Can be under Such a Weight of Sorrow Nancy has a lovely Husband [Ethan Clarke] and Seams happy She is up Early and Cuts the bread of Carefullness they take the farm this year though tis not his way of Business for he has been in trade Since of age Brother left a Will Dividing his Estate Near equal with a Sheet of Paper inclosd with the most affecting advise. Mr Green & March [Henry Marchant] Execketors but as Mr Clark was in the family So capable thoght it was best for him to administer there is a large landed Estate and Some Large Debts that tis advised by the friends to render it insolvent that the Creditors may not Break upon it and Distress Mr Clark and have it Sold to disadvantage the Children all Seams to be willing to help themselves Polly is very Nice and injenious a fine hand to mend mens cloths to Put in Pieces and to do every thing in that way and there is a few families of us Can imploy her Debe is to learn to be a Mantu Maker and Kitt [Christopher Greene?] says he will give her a Silk Gownd as soon as she has got it Ray

he has a Mecanical turn his Uncle [W. Greene] is going this day to Providence to get him a Place John loves a book dont love hard work Dickey the finest understanding and good Naturd Boy I have ever seen is to go to School Betsey is to live with her Maiden Aunts Believe Poor Samey [Ward Jr] Still a Prisoner we heard from him the middle of April had the Small Pox & well Cousin Kitt too had no letter Cousin Arnold is in So great a hurry Cant write all I want will write again by the Post Caty Kitt her and my Spoues and the Babe all went to Westerly together the Gentlemen came home Kitt come for us our Genll Assembly have granted enoculation in the government.

My affectionate Regards to Mrs Beach & Spoues a Kiss to each of the Dear Children love to that ye [torn] takes so much notice of [torn] Comes to New England [torn] to him in acts as kind if [torn] your very affectionate [torn] I have sent Ray [Greene] Pr of Stockings and now I [torn] a pair allmost done which if you will finish you will oblige your obligd old girl will you nit Brother a Couple of Pr of Very Nice Cotton ones if I Send the yarn Which [torn] your busy hands doing now you will be [torn] Glad to see Cousin Welcom

Joy at Franklin's return from Canada, mingled with pride in her son Ray's scholastic ability shone out from Caty's letter of July 3. Naturally she and Mr. Greene were pleased that the learned Franklin thought their son worthy of receiving an education beyond that of any member of his family for several generations; learning was at a discount in early Rhode Island. Again she made it clear that the Greenses were dependent upon their farm for their living. There was a third wedding at Caty's home when Jane Flagg was married to Elihu Greene, brother of Nathanael, December 5, 1776.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PHILADELPHIA²⁹

Warwick July ye 3d 1776

My Dearly belovd Friend

I Gladly once more Welcom you To your own home though I Lament the occation hope by this you have Recoverd your Health & the Pheteiuge of So Disagreeable a Tuor & have Resumd the Chearfull agreeable BENJAMIN FRANKLIN Pray God to Preserve you long a Blessing to your family Friends & Ingurd Country

We have Disagreeable accounts from N-York and Quebeck But Still hope there Is Virtue & Stability enough in our friends to Send our Enemies a Shamd to there own homes, and be Simple Bread & Water the Portion of there Cheifs and that in a Dungeon But I Reflect is not Such guilty Conciencionss Punishment enough Ile leave them to a Higer Power, And to our agreeable Corrispond which has been So long Bar,d I think your last favor is Jan'y 27th a long while indeed But you have been Sick and in a Strange Land do give Sister Some little account of it and She will give it me for She is a Dear good Woman and I know you have not time—In yours you wrote you had Put Ray to Lattin School which we was much Pleasd with as we Proposd giving him learning if his Capacity was good enough of which being Parents we did not think our Selves Judges Mr Greene was Just in Since my writeing and Designd to have wrote him Self to you but tis a Severe Drouth with us and has a Number of People makeing Hay So that is obligd to be with them But Desires his Kind Regards to you and Many thanks for your Care of his Boy and Says he hopes you will Call upon him for Money when ever you think fit for he does

not love large Sums against him and would be Glad to know what Sum would Carry him throw Colledg and if you think tis Best for him to Come home this Vacancy whether he would be Willing to go again or not I Could Deny my Self any Pleasure for My Childrens advantage those at home with Jenny & the family are all well and Joyn in Respects to you I dont know but think Jenny is like to get one of our best Matches you are So good a friend to Matrimony that you will be Glad to hear of it I Could Run much farther but fear the Post will be gone So I bid you Day Day God Bless

your friend that loves

you Dearly

Caty Greene

Brother Hubbard
Desires his love to all

When Franklin departed from Caty's home in Warwick late in October, 1775, neither of them could have anticipated another meeting as soon as the coming July. Yet fate granted them that favor when Caty accompanied her husband to Philadelphia, where he had been sent by the General Assembly on Colony business.

This business arose when Congress, at the request of General Washington, on May 11, 1776, passed "a resolve for taking into Continental pay, the two Rhode Island battalions . . . " On July 22 the Assembly appointed William Greene and John Collins a committee to collect the \$120,000 due from the Congress for that purpose.³⁰

With both his father and mother away Ray Greene, now eleven, took advantage of a favorable opportunity to write Franklin and "Granmah" Mecom.

RAY GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN AND JANE
(FRANKLIN) MECOM AT PHILADELPHIA³¹

Honord Sir

Warwick August 4th/ 1776

It would be Ungrateful in me not to Acknowledge the many Obligations I am Under to you and my Good Granmah Mecom by so good an opportunity as this Pappa and Mammah had thoughts of taking me with them my mamma wrote you of my getting home well or I should Certainly have done it as I know you thought of me we had a very Pleasant journey I saw some of my relations in new york very intimate acquaintances that did not know me they said I was so much altered and by their Smiles Concluded they thought it was for the better most all my friends wishes me to go back again shall I Conclude they love me Indeed Sir I love you Dearly Gratitude says I must [go back] but had rather stay at home Pray give my Duty to Mr & Mrs Bache and Sincere love to Mr temple and all the family who I tenderly Regard Permit to write a few lines to my Dear Granmah in your letter I'm your Dutiful & Obliged Servant

Ray Greene

Warwick August 4th/ 1776

Dear Granmah I have not wrote you before for I have been of errands and once Smart to work when the Post Past but I hope the Bearer of this will appologise I have A high Sence of your Goodness to me I know tis out of my Power but to returnit as I hope you will be Pleased with Cousin Jennys match which they tell me is to be one I hope Pretty Soon if you like it he comes Pretty often Please to give my love to all my friends I will write you again Soon

Your Dutiful & Obliged Boy
Ray Greene

The decision to have Mrs. Greene accompany him to Philadelphia may have been influenced by William Greene's resolution to take the small-pox by inoculation while at the great medical center and thereby render himself immune to the dread disease which had carried off his brother-in-law, Samuel Ward, the previous March. A law passed by the General Assembly of Rhode Island permitting inoculation perhaps influenced him also.

If, as is likely, it took the Greens the same number of days to go to Philadelphia as it did to return, they arrived there July 31. The date of their departure is fixed by Franklin's letter to his grandson Temple, September 19: "Mr. & Mrs. Green went from hence on Monday [September 16], on their Return. I wish they may be in time to cross the North River safely at some of the upper Ferries"³²

The Greens, therefore, were in Philadelphia more than six weeks. As Franklin had been their guest on three occasions, it seems reasonable to suppose that they were his guests, Caty for the full time and her husband after his discharge from the hospital. Whether Caty and Franklin were under the same roof is immaterial: the point is that they were in close proximity for a longer period than ever before in their twenty years of friendship. Although Franklin was never more busy in his life, there must have been opportunities for the conversation they both enjoyed so much.

On her return to Rhode Island, September 27, Caty wrote Franklin a long report of their journey home.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PHILADELPHIA³³

My Dear Friend

Warwick Ocbr ye 1st 1776

You will be Glad to hear of our geting home Safe which we did Friday night being 9 1/2 Days on our Journey/10 on the Rhode layd by one throw a Careless trick of Catharines [herself] but as Dont Choose to Leson her in your esteem Shall not tell the Particulars — I wrote you from New Rochell after we had Past the troubled Waters

which hope you have Receivd After that had nothing Remarkable except at the Publick houses Wonderful accounts from N-york Such as was Never there Supposd we Come from Newhaven to Harford and then to Windham and then to Providence where we Deliverd our treasure Meeting with no other trouble with it then, the Bulk and heft we there heard of Celias haveing the Small Pox finely at Medfield and was expectked to be out in a day or two Calld upon a few friends & Came home where we was So Joyfully Receivd as was worth takeing the Journey for had we had no other Pleasure they had all been Very Clever & Sayd there had been but one or two Disagreeable things had happend which Desird not to hear of — Comeing from your house at first I hardly knew whether to be Glad or Sorry you was not at home as the Parting from those we love is Sorrow, but when I Pleasd my Self with the Wish you had to Run a way from hurry and Come to New England I was Sorry as Wanted you to Strengthen the hope but not without you Could Pass the North River with great Safety and you Could be made Very Comfortable on the Rhode and then I Could wish you to take your Dear Sister with you whoes Heart is So Divided between So good a Brother and a Distrest Daughter that though She appears Chearfull is Very un happy and for fear of makeing her friends So keeps all to her Self She is a Dear good Woman and in whatever would Contribute to her happiness Should do it Willingly our Best Regards to mr & mrs Beach Beney and Dear little Willy all of you I long to feast with us on fine Peaches & Pares and Bakt Sweet apples all which we have in great Plenty Uncle Philip [Greene] is here the Person you Visited with me and adds his love as does Jenny Phebe & Ray who is a good Boy as is Samey and other Children I am with Due Respect and as much love as you wish,

your friend

Caty Greene

Be kind enough to give our love to Mr Elery and mention our geting home well Mr Greene would have wrote but has Company We feasted upon you a great deal Since we left your house for all there is but Such a Morsal of you left

Poor Doctr Babcock with mr Collins the Gentle man that was to come to us was at New york at the time the City was given up the Doctr Run and Lost his horse for a time mr Collins got over the Jersey Side and left both his horses but the Doctr got his again one of our officers had Rhode it off

I askt Gen^l Greene if there was any Prospect of our Prisoners being Releast from Quebeck he Sayd it lay with the Congress Do my Dear Friend if there is any exchanging them let it be done for they have Past throw Such amesing hardships [torn] as makes it Nessary for there Country to [bestir th]emselves in there Cause When I Say or write too free Pray tel me

Caty and Franklin had seen each other for the last time. He had sailed away to France where he was to remain until 1785. Upon his return the stone in his bladder was so painful that he was unable to travel; for some unknown reason Caty never went to Philadelphia to see him. But their friendship did not die and their correspondence continued until March, 1789, the year before Franklin's death.

1. Van Doren, Carl, *Benjamin Franklin*, 440-441, N. Y., Viking, 1938.

2. Jane Mecom and Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, May 14, 1775, to Franklin at Phila. Yale University Library.

3. Franklin, Phila., May 26, 1775, to Jane Mecom at Warwick. *Smyth Writings* VI : 403.

4. Franklin, Phila., June 17, 1775, to Jane Mecom at Warwick.

5. Franklin, Phila., June 17, 1775, to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick.*

6. Jane Mecom and Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, July 14, 1775, to Franklin at Phila.

7. Franklin, Phila., Aug. 2, 1775, to Jane Mecom at Warwick.

8. Samuel Ward, Providence, Aug. 12, 1775, to Franklin at Phila. du Simitière Collection, Library Company of Phila., Ridgway Branch.

9. Smyth, *Writings* VI:428.

10. Greene, George W., *The life of Nathanael Greene* I:116-117, N. Y., Hurd & Houghton, 1871.

11. Franklin, Cambridge, Oct. 16, 1775, to Jane Mecom at Warwick.

12. Stiles, *Diary* I:633.

13. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Westerly, [Nov. 13, 1775], to Franklin at Phila.

14. William Greene, Westerly, Nov. 13, 1775, to Franklin at Phila.

15. Samuel Ward, Phila., Dec. 27, 1775, to Catharine (Ward) Greene at Potowomut. R.I. Hist. Soc.

16. Van Doren, *Benjamin Franklin*, 535.

17. Jane Mecom, Phila., Nov. 24, 1775, to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick.

18. Sarah Bache, b. Dec. 1, 1775; d. Aug. 17, 1776. *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register*, 8:374, 1854.

19. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Jan. 13, [1776], to Franklin at Phila.

20. Smyth, *Writings* VI:445.

21. Smyth, *Writings* VI:450.

22. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Feb. 7, [1776], to Jane Mecom at Phila.*

23. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Feb. 20, 1776, to Jane Mecom at Phila.*

24. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, March 12, (1776), to Jane Mecom at Phila.*

25. Jane Mecom, Phila., May 8, 1776, to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick.

26. *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island*, John R. Bartlett, ed., hereafter cited as *R.I.C.R.*, VII:537, 1856-1865.

27. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, June 21, 1776, to Jane Mecom at Phila.*

28. Cf. Updike, Wilkins, *A history of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett, Rhode Island*, The Rev. Daniel Goodwin, ed., II:290, Boston, Merrymount, 1907.

29. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, July 3, 1776, to Franklin at Phila.

30. *R.I.C.R.* VII:527, 594; *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Worthington C. Ford, ed., V:728, Gov. Print. Off., 1910-1937.

31. Ray Greene, Warwick, Aug. 4, 1776, to Franklin and Jane Mecom at Phila.

32. Smyth, *Writings* VI:468.

33. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Oct. 1, 1776, to Franklin at Phila.

* Copies.

IV. Franklin at Paris

1776-1785

CONGRESS chose three commissioners on September 26, 1776, to represent it at the court of France: Franklin, Jefferson, and Silas Deane, who was then in Paris. Jefferson could not go because of his wife's ill health, and Arthur Lee, then in London, was substituted as the third commissioner. Seventy years old and troubled with boils, Franklin sailed from Philadelphia, October 27, on the armed sloop *Reprisal*, accompanied by two grandsons, Temple, nearly seventeen, and Benjamin Franklin Bache, seven. It was a hazardous voyage, for he knew that if the *Reprisal* were captured by one of the many British men-of-war patrolling the French coast, he was almost certain to be hanged. After a fast voyage of thirty-eight days he landed at Auray, December 3, and finished his journey by land to Nantes.

Franklin arrived at Paris, December 21, 1776, and overnight found himself famous. John Adams, who was often critical of him, was forced to acknowledge Franklin's success with the French:

But Franklin's fame was universal. His name was familiar to government and people [both of high and low degree to such an extent that there was scarcely anyone] who was not familiar with it, and who did not consider him as a friend to human kind.¹

It became the rage to make likenesses of him: busts, medallions, and engravings. In response to her request Franklin sent Caty Greene an iron medallion which still hangs over the big fireplace in the Greene homestead.

The enthusiastic reception of the French people had its disagreeable side: it was impossible for Franklin to have any privacy. Therefore when Donatien Le Ray de Chaumont, a zealous friend to the American cause, offered him the hospitality of a pavilion or wing of his large house at Passy, Franklin was

glad to accept. The large garden by the house which de Chaumont placed at Franklin's disposal was undoubtedly an important attraction; there he resided in comfort until his return to America in 1785.

Though he was well situated as far as comfort was concerned, Franklin was under a heavy strain. British men-of-war had nearly severed all communication with America, and the little news that came through was almost all bad. The single exception to the story of defeat and disaster was Washington's victory at Trenton, December 26, 1776. This was but a flash in the pan. In the summer of 1777 events again took a turn for the worse, and it seemed highly probable that the army advancing up the Hudson under Lord Howe would effect a junction with that of General Burgoyne coming down by way of Lake George from Canada, cutting the colonies in two and bringing a sudden end to American resistance.

Throughout this gloomy period Franklin remained serene and even gay. When he was told that Howe had taken Philadelphia, he turned it off with the reply, "I beg your pardon, sir, Philadelphia has taken Howe."² His faith was justified by the arrival on December 4, 1777, of Captain Jonathan Loring Austin with the news of Washington's spirited and all but successful attack on the British at Germantown and Burgoyne's surrender of his entire army at Saratoga. Austin was also the bearer of two welcome private letters: one from Franklin's step-niece, Mrs. Elizabeth (Hubbard) Partridge, and the other, from Caty Greene, the first one she had written since he left America.

Betsey Partridge's letter congratulated Franklin "on the Signal Success that Heaven has granted to the American Arms," and enclosed a newspaper giving additional details of the surrender. She added, "Aunt Mecom is at Coventry with her Grandaughter Mrs Greene, & [her daughter] Mrs Collis is with her, they are all Well. Our Friend Mrs Green & Family are well, She with her Son & Daughter left Boston Yesterday."³

The most important news in Caty's letter was an account of Jane Mecom's flight from Philadelphia a few days before General Howe and the British occupied the city, September 27, 1777. Jane, she reported, had arrived safely at Coventry, Rhode Island,

the home of her granddaughter, Jane Flagg, now the wife of Elihu Greene. Since Nathanael Greene had entered the army, his younger brother Elihu had taken over the management of the forge at Coventry owned by Jacob Greene & Co.

From October, 1777, until December, 1782, Jane Mecom lived much of the time with the Elihu Greenes at either Coventry or Potowomut. Since the Governor Greene homestead was only a few miles from either place, Caty sent her carriage whenever possible to fetch Jane Mecom for a visit. This propinquity brought them together closer than ever, though their friendship was "not of a Summers," as Caty once wrote Jane, referring to her long visit in 1775. They had taken a liking to each other when they had first met at Boston in 1754, and their friendship grew stronger with the years because of their common devotion to Franklin.

Caty also advised Franklin of the birth of another of his grandchildren, Eliza Franklin Bache, and reported on a visit she had made to her son Ray at Dummer Academy, kept by the famous Samuel Moody at Newbury, Massachusetts.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT BOSTON TO FRANKLIN
AT PARIS⁴

Boston Octobr ye 28th 1777

My Very Dear Friend

I have this moment heard of an oppertunity of Writeing to you and though there geting my horses up to go home I must write you how do you do and that our family was well 12 days Past when I left them and Id the Pleasure of Carreing yr Dear Sister to her Granddaughters Greenes the day before I Came a way and Mrs Collis She [Jane Mecom] is exceeding well and quite Contented in her Deliverance from Hows Ravages She left Philadelphia but a few days Before he marcht to the Jarmen town [Germantown] Suppose you have heard Mrs Beach was a bed with a fine Daughter her aunt and My Self are Concerned

for her but every thing was in Readines to Carry her to a friends house, Ive been to Newbury Port to See Ray who is at Dumers School he is in a good house and well belovd how does my Friends Mr Temple and Master Benny do Please to Remember me to them and be assurd of the Best wishes of yr old Catharine who longs to See you at Warwick Celia is with me I leave the greate News to more inteligable Pens But we are all happy with the Pleasing appearance of things friend here are all well Uncle & aunt Gooch at whose house I am Disere there love to you as does Brother Hubbard &c &c do let us have if but one line from you to hear you are well we love yr Dear Sister as well as ever yr Very affectionate

Caty Greene

The victory at Saratoga and the ensuing surrender of Burgoyne's army, October 7, 1777, dispelled the gloomy forebodings of American collapse and galvanized the French into action. The treaty between France and the United States, which the commissioners had been vainly attempting to negotiate for more than a year, was signed February 6 and was avowed by Louis XVI March 20, 1778.

On April 19 Simeon Deane, brother of commissioner Silas Deane, landed in Boston with the news of the signing and avowal.⁵ He carried private letters from Franklin to Jane Mecom, which she acknowledged May 8. It seems likely that he brought the letter which Franklin had written Caty on February 28 announcing the great news of the alliance. This is one of the few letters he ever wrote to her which dealt with politics. He expressed his pleasure at the marriage of Jane Flagg to Elihu Greene. The context shows that he had received letters from Warwick telling of the proximity of the enemy and the danger to which those whom he loved had been exposed and concludes with the wish that he might be once more a guest under Caty's hospitable roof.

FRANKLIN AT PARIS TO CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE
AT WARWICK⁶

My dear old Friend,

Paris, Feb. 28. 1778.

Don't be offended at the Word *old*; I don't mean to call you an *old Woman*; it relates only to the Age of our Friendship; which on my part has always been a sincerely affectionate one, and I flatter myself the same on yours.

I receivd your kind Letter from Boston of Oct. 28. which gave me great Pleasure, as it inform'd me of the Welfare of you and your Family. I continue hearty, as do my two Grandsons, who present their Respects to you & Mr Greene, being pleas'd with your Remembrance of them. We are all glad to hear of Ray, for we all love him. — I have been often much concern'd for my Friends at Warwick, hearing that the Enemy was so near them. I hope your Troubles will not be of much longer Duration: For tho' the Wickedness of the English Court, & its Malice against us is as great as ever, its Horns are shortened; its Strength diminishes daily; and we have form'd an Alliance here, & shall form others, that will help to keep the Bull quiet, and make him orderly.—I chat, you see, as usual, anyhow, with you, who are kind enough never to criticise Improprieties in my Comparisons, or anything else.—I see by yours that my Sister's Grandaughter is married. I wish the young Folks Joy and lasting Happiness. I pity my poor old Sister, to be so harass'd & driven about by the Enemy. For I feel a little myself the Inconvenience of being driven about by my Friends.—I live here in great Respect, and dine every day with great Folks; but I still long for home & for Repose; and should be happy to eat Indian Pudding in your Company & under your hospitable Roof. Remember me kindly to the Remainder of the

Wards, and to all that wish me well. Assure Mr Greene of my sincere Esteem & Respect, and believe me ever,

My dear Friend,

Yours most affectionately

B Franklin

My Regards to Dr Babcock
& Family, when you see any of
them

In the spring of 1778 Rhode Island suffered severely at the hands of the enemy. British troops occupying Newport made frequent raids on the farms near the shores of the lower Bay, carrying off cattle and burning barns and houses. On the sea American ships were being taken in great numbers. In a letter dated April, 1778, to her daughter, Mrs. Jane Collas, Jane Mecom wrote that the Greenses of Potowomut

have this morning received intelligence of two more of their vessels being taken; one of them had been to port and would have made a fine voyage, had she come safe. William [next oldest brother of Elihu Greene] says this is nine vessels taken this war in which they had property, and that it will make them little folks. That is his expression.⁷

Jane's letter of May 5 to Franklin related how her grandson-in-law Elihu Greene had sent a phaeton to Philadelphia for her. Major Samuel Ward, Jr., who had recently married Phebe Greene, Caty's eldest daughter, had traveled from Peekskill to Philadelphia in order to escort Jane to Coventry. Their honeymoon had been interrupted because he was obliged to return to camp.

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AT WARWICK TO
FRANKLIN AT PARIS⁸

Mrs Greene remembers her love to you thanks you for yr leter designs to write but as I have an oportunity to Send this to Boston now I do not wait for hers the Judg is gone to provedence to Election I am in Expectation he

will come back Governor but She charges me not to tell you So as it is very disagreeable to her. I am as Ever Dear Brother

your affectionat Sister

Jane Mecom

In the War for Independence, even as in the most recent one, the women worked for the soldiers. On May 16, 1778, Jane wrote Mrs. Collas that if she had been near enough she would have had the example of the Governors Lady & the Ambassadors Sister, making ruffill Shirts & Stockings for the Souldiers, who were in great want & could not get hands anouf to supply them, al the families in this place asisted & were paid for it as they knew not who they should give it to if they did not.⁹

On August 15, 1778, Jane wrote from Potowomut, near the shore, to her brother a long letter containing a full account of the family news. She congratulated Franklin on the British evacuation of Philadelphia, June 18; she had heard that little damage had been done to houses and therefore supposed that his had come through unscathed.

She told of a concentration of American and French forces to drive the British from the island of Rhode Island. Her grandson, Elihu Greene, and two of his brothers had volunteered for the campaign and both Nathanael Greene and Lafayette were also there.

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AT WARWICK TO
FRANKLIN AT PARIS¹⁰

I hope they will have there desiered Suckses for the Sake of the whol comunitie & a litle for my own for I have lived in constant Jeperdie Since the Spring when my children removed from Coventry to this place where we are much Exposed & have been under constant Aprehensions, I have been Part of the time at the Governors but it was full as bad there for they offered a reward for Takeing him, you

will Acknolidg this is Rather wors than being harrised about by wons Friends . . . I wrot you of our Friend Greene,s being Governor, that Ray was at mr Moodys Scool & comes on bravely with His Learning, that there Eldest Daughter was married to Maj^r Ward.

Goods being scarce and high priced in America, William Greene in December, 1778, asked his friend Franklin to do him the favor of purchasing some articles for him in France. To provide the wherewithal he sent Franklin two hundred sixteen dollars in bills of exchange. Part of the money, he explained, belonged to his son-in-law, Major Samuel Ward, Jr., whose late father, Governor Ward, had been a close friend of Franklin. Greene added that young Ward desired to enter the mercantile business and to have cargoes consigned to him by French merchants. If Franklin was able to favor Ward in this way, Governor Greene was prepared to vouch for him. He explained that Ward was an army man, but would associate himself with a man of business experience, which would obviate the necessity of his leaving the army, in which he had served since the beginning of the war.

The uncertainty of communications had made it customary, and almost obligatory, to send several sets of bills of exchange by different vessels in order to be sure that one set would reach its destination. In this case Greene sent three sets. The first, with which was enclosed a letter from Caty, was lost. The second, which follows, and third sets, each with an accompanying letter varying slightly in the text, reached Franklin in February, 1779.

February 13 Franklin wrote to Jonathan Williams at Nantes asking him to purchase and ship to Greene several kinds of dry goods and a box of window glass.

The William Vernon of Newport mentioned in Greene's letter to Franklin was an important merchant, who had been elected by Congress May 6, 1777, to the Eastern Navy Board; he served as its president throughout the war.

WILLIAM GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN AT PARIS¹¹

Warwick State Rhode-Island December 10th 1778

Hon,^d Sir

I take the liberty of enclosing some bills of exchange of small Value amounting to two Hundred and Sixteen Dollars and beg the favour of you to lay them out for me as I have no other Friend in Paris, you will Pardon me I hope for giving you this trouble—my Son in Law Majr Samuel Ward owns a part tho he has never had the Honour of your acquaintance he wishes to challenge a small share of your friendship because you was a friend to his Father—

I have a thought which I shall mention without reserve for your approbation—My Son in law wishes to have the assignments of Cargoes from Merchants in France and do business, if you could favour him in that way I think I dare answer for his Honour and Integrity. he has not been much conversant in Business—but would in that case connect himself with a Gentleman whose Skill would be undoubted and prevent the necessity of his leaving the Army—in which he has served with Honour since the Commencment of the War. I wrote and Inclos,^d to you the 1st of this Instant one set of bills of exchange amounting to two Hundred and Sixteen Dollars part of which are Indors,^d the others which are made payable to me and Samuel Ward amounting to One Hundred and Seventy four Dollars are omitted must therefore beg the favour of you to Indorse them in our behalf

This is the second set of Bills of exchange being of the same Tenor and date, in this and the third are inclos,^d memorandums of articles that will be agreable to us to receive if it will not be too much Trouble for you to procure them.

Mr William Vernon junr being now in France am glad of this opportunity to recommend him to your Notice as a young Gentleman whose morals before he left here by the best Information I have been able to collect stood unexceptionable and he being a Promising youth his Father who is William Vernon Esqr one of the Members of the Marine Board of this Continent has Bountifully bestow'd upon him the advantages of a liberal education and has now sent him to France to procure the French language &c that he may have an opportunity to be a useful Member of Society

Your sister is here very well desires her most Sincere regards may be remembered to you and says that she wrote the Seventh Instant for which reason she omits this Opportunity, the same reasons are assign'd by Mrs Greene as she inclos'd her letter to you in my first but she desires very Affectionately to be remembered to you; my son who has been a shearer in your Advice, is now at school at Newbury and I believe is likely to be a good scholar and shou'd he be bless'd with prudence may likely make a useful man in his day now may every blessing attend you, who under God have been Instrumental in a very great degree in settling a Treaty of Amity and Commerce and of Alliance eventually and defensively between his Most Christian Majesty and these United States as also in many other Instances that might be very justly added.

I am with every Sentiment of respect

Your Sincere and Oblig'd Friend
and Humble Servt

William Greene

Jane was staying at Caty's when she wrote Franklin, January 4, 1779. She had written him on December 7, but seized the opportunity to send a letter by the trustworthy hand of Wanton Casey, a neighbor who lived about a half mile down the hill on the Boston Post Road.

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PASSY¹²

. . . when shall we be at peace that we may at least have the comfort of Each others letters which to me is grat. I do not pretend to Say any thing about publick Affairs & as to my Self I have mett with much troble & many mercys, I Injoy much helth & the Same friendly Entertainment from ye Governer & wife while I am hear, & the Same at my Grandchilds which are blesings. there famelies are boath well & our friend Caty desiers to be remembred to you, her Husband is not at home. I write among so much noise & confusion that if I had any thing of consequence I could not Recolect it & will not atemt any more but that I am as Ever yr affectionat Sister

Jane Mecom

My love to Temple & Benny
I expect Mr Wanton Casey
who is to be the barer of this
to Send for it as he is to Sett of
for Boston in the morning
therefore have no other time to write

The quarrels and dissension which had divided the three commissioners to France came to an end when Congress, September 14, appointed Franklin sole commissioner and Minister Plenipotentiary.

Washington gave Lafayette special leave to carry Franklin's commission and the instructions of Congress to Paris. Although four sets of instructions were sent by different vessels, only that borne by Lafayette got through, so bad were the communications at the time. Under these conditions it is not surprising that few private letters reached their destination.

The following letters from Franklin to Jonathan Williams at Nantes and to William Greene at Warwick are self explanatory; they refer to the order to purchase goods, which Governor Greene had sent to Franklin for the account of Samuel Ward, Jr., and himself.

FRANKLIN AT PASSY TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS AT
NANTES¹³

Passy, Feb. 13, 1779.

Dear Cousin:—

I have the pleasure of acquainting you that the Congress have been pleased to honour me with a sole appointment to be their Minister Plenipotentiary at this Court, and I have just received my Credentials. This Mark of public Confidence is the more agreeable to me as it was not obtained by any Solicitation or Intrigue on my Part, nor have I ever written a Syllable to any Person, in or out of Congress, magnifying my own Services or diminishing those of others.

William Greene, Esq., present Govr of the the State of Rhode Island, has sent me some Bills of Exchange, amounting to 1,080 Livres, which he desires may be laid out in the following Articles: one Piece dark Calico; one Piece Bedtick; best Silk Handkerchiefs and Linnen Do; Hollands, Cambricks, Muslins, Sewing Silk, and one Box of Window Glass, 7 Inches by 9. I send you this Commission, and desire you to forward the Things by the first good Opportunity, drawing upon me for the Money . . .

FRANKLIN AT PASSY TO WILLIAM GREENE AT WARWICK¹⁴

Passy, June 4 [1779]

Dear Sir,

I received your kind Letter of Decr 10. with the Bills of Exchange for two hundred and sixteen Dollars, & with the List of Goods you would have in return. As I live far from any Seaport and am unacquainted with Merchandize, I sent the Bills, with your Order directly to my Nephew at Nantes, who will I doubt not accomplish it to your Satisfaction.

I shall be glad of any Opportunity of being serviceable to your Son-in-law, both for your Sake and his Father's.

Your Letter with the first set of the Bills did not come to hand; which I regret the more, as by that means I have lost Mrs Greene's Letter which you tell me was inclosed. Present my affectionate Respects to her; and my Love with that of my Grandsons to honest Ray, of whose Welfare I am very glad to hear and of his Progress in his Learning.

If my Sister continues [under] your hospitable Roof, let her know that I receive hers of the 7th that you mention; [torn] I have not time now to write to her, but will by the next Opportunity; and that I am well and love her as well as ever.

With great Esteem & Respect, I am,

Dear Sir,

Your most obed^t and
most humble Servant
B Franklin

P. S. If the Chevalier De la Luzerne should pass thro' your Government, I recommend him warmly to your Civilities. He goes over to supply the Place of M. Gerard, as his most Christian Majestys Minister to the Congress. He is a Gentleman of a most amiable Character here, has great Connections, and is a hearty Friend to America.

June 23, 1779, Jane complained again that she had received no letter from Franklin since that brought by Simeon Dean the previous year. She admitted that she did hear once in a while in a roundabout way of his political achievements and also of his

increasing favor with the French ladies now that he had become a courtier. Her caustic comment drew from Franklin an explanatory letter about the manners and customs of France. Betsey Hubbard must also have written him about the report, as he sent her a similar explanation. Perhaps he felt a little guilty! Even Caty was moved to complain: "I grow Very Jealous of you I fear the french Ladies have taken you intirely from us for we dont have a Single line from you this long Very long time"

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PASSY¹⁵

Dear Brother

Warwick June 23d- 1779

. . . I have wrot you many Leters (Some of which I hope you have recd) Informing you of Every thing concerning me worthy yr atention, I have not yet recd a line from you Since that by Mr Simeon Deane [April 19, 1778], but bless God I now & then hear of yr helth & Glorious Achievements in the political way, as well as in the favour of the Ladys (Since you have rubd off the Mechanic Rust and commenced compleat courtier) who Jonathan Williams writes me clame from you the Tribute of an Embrace & it Seemes you do not complane of the Tax as a very grat penance

we have Grat News of the Defeat of the Britons at Carolina; which we hope is trew but have had no printed account of it yet.

God grant this may put a final Stop to there Ravages, my Grandson whome I am with lives where we have frequent alarmes they have come & taken of the Stock about 3 quarters of a mile distant & burnt houses a few miles from us, but hitherto we are preserved.

I have as much helth as can be Expected in comon for won of my years [67] & live in a very Pleasant place tho not Grand as I Sopose yrs is it gives me grat delight the Famely is kind & courtious; my Grandson is a man

of Sound Sense, & Solid Judgment, & I take ~~much~~ Pleasure in his conversation tho he talks but little, ~~they have~~ won child which they Call Sally. Gov^r Greene & famely are well I had wrot you there Eldest Daughter was married to Gov^r Wards Son they have now a fine Son, Ray is Still at Mr Moodys Scool a promising youth

Jane was comfortable with her granddaughter at Potowomut, but she was lonely. Naturally a gregarious person she missed the daily contact with people. Therefore when Franklin suggested that they might spend their last days together, Jane was overjoyed: "o my Dear Brother if this could be Accomplished it would give me more Joy than any thing on this Side Heaven could posably do; I feel the want of Suitable conversation I have but little hear," she wrote him July 27, 1779.

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AT WARWICK TO
FRANKLIN AT PASSY¹⁶

yr Friends Greene are well & He gives Satisfaction in His office, they have boath written to you Since the date of yrs to me. they are happy to hear of your helth & Suckses, my Grandson & Daughter Send there Duty to you they are a happy cople have won child calld Sally, he is Sensable & very Industrious man & She a very good wife, boath treet me very kindly, & I beleve I am as happy as it is common for a human being, what is otherways may proceed from my own Impatience.

September 12 Jane wrote Franklin that he was free to choose his own time to visit his friends.

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AT WARWICK TO
FRANKLIN AT PASSY¹⁷

I have not the privilege of won Neibour near than two miles [the Greenes] but we have many agreable people come to visit us & I am all ways contented at home, &

pleas^d to go a broad when Sent for, otherways I cannot go for our people have no carrage & I hant courage to ride a hors.

Caty's letter of a week later indicates that she realized that Jane was lonely, and she goes on to say that Jane was a favorite and beloved guest.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PASSY¹⁸

Warwick Sept^r ye 19th 1779

My Very Dear Friend

The first time I wrote you Since you have been in France was in the greatest hurry with my Bunnet on Just going a Journey. Which is the only one I Can ever hear you have Received which incorages me to imbrace a nother moment in all most as great a hurry Just to tell you we are well Spoues and Family and Friends. Except our Dear Mrs Mecom Who for a fortnight has been worried a good deal with the Assme and her old Cough She is now with Jenny When we have the Emtyest house We Send for her to Stay with us She Cant Bear Company as She used to do We love her and She loves us Capt Colas and Spoues has been up which gave her a good deal of Pleasure He gave us an agreeable history of Doctr Franklin Which is Pleasing to us as we love to hear of your health and yr Releaveing us from the Brittish yoke &c &c

Mr Greene has Receivd your favor and the Dittoes from mr Williams that is they are at Providence the State [has received] the Books from you Mr Greene writes you as Soon as an hours Leisure he has Company Now he Joyns me in love and Regard as does My Children Samey Ward Ray Continues at Schoo Near Newbury and they Say makes good Improvement Pleas to Remember us

to Your Grandson with you and Benny when you write, Mrs Mecem had a letter from mrs Bache this Summer which gave a Pritty Particular account of the family which I Seamd to be interested in I am Calld upon God Bless you My Dear Friend and Permit me to Subcribe my Self yr

Very affectionate friend

Caty Greene

Sarah Bache wrote to her aunt Jane about the efforts of the ladies of Philadelphia to supply the officers of the army with clothing and other articles which they lacked. Jane replied in an undated letter, a copy of which is now at Yale University Library.

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AT WARWICK TO SARAH
(FRANKLIN) BACHE AT PHILADELPHIA¹⁹

I have, as you suppose, heard of your ladies noble and generous subscription for the army, and honour them for it; and if a hearty good will in me would effect it would follow your example; but I fear what my influence would procure would be so diminutive we should be ashamed to offer it. I live in an obscure place, have but little acquaintance, and those not very rich; but, you may say, a mite has been accepted and may be again, but there was a time when there was more religion and less pride. I really believe our friend Mrs Greene would be forward to set the example here as any of your ladies, had she the power, but her family have suffered extremely in their fortune by the depreciation: several of their farms were let on lease, and had the paper money tendered to them, and could not help themselves: great part of their interest lay in Block Island, where they could get nothing, as the person has proved dishonest and poor, and a debt he had contracted in paper money, the creditor living in Newport, where he could not get at him to discharge it [because of the British occupation], and now the Britons

have left it, insists on silver and the Gov^r has paid it; I forget whether it was four thousand pound or four thousand dollars, but either is a great sum in silver at this day.

Governor Greene replied October 5 to Franklin's letter of June 4 asking him to be polite to Chevalier de la Luzerne by saying that the Chevalier had passed through Worcester on his way to Congress. He also thanked Franklin for a package of books.

WILLIAM GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PARIS²⁰

Warwick State Rhode Island &c October 5th 1779

Honoured Sir

I with much Pleasure received your very Friendly letter of the 4th of last June, by which I am informed of The Perticular care you took to employ your Nephew to transact my buisness, since which I have also received his letter enclosing the invoice of the articles I wrote you for, which have also come safe to hand.

Am much Obliged to you for the Tenderness you discover Towards my Son in law, and Ray both of whom I think are likely to be beneficial to their distress,^d Country.

The Chevalier, Dela, Luzern Since his arrival in Boston went by the way of Worcester on his way to Congress, His taking his Tour that way depriv,^d me of the Pleasure of waiting on him.

The General Assembly of this State received a letter from Mr Williams in your behalf of March 10th with a Package of books containing the History of Geneva by M. Berenget in Six Volumes, as a Present to and for their use and benefit, for which they have requested me to return you their Sincere Thanks, and to inform you that they shall ever acknowledge The favour with gratitude

as it greatly tends to discover your good Intentions to Promote the Publick welfare.

I am much Pleased to hear of the Prospect you have in your Grand Son as I hope he may hereafter be instrumental in supplying his Grand Fathers Place in the great business of his Country; as by that means you may be relieved from the same in some future Period, and once more return to your Native land, and enjoy that comfort and Satisfaction which must be very agreeable, when you reflect that you have been bless,d by Heaven to continue to an advanced age, as by far the greatest Part of your time has been devoted for the well being of the Publick, as I dare say the Inhabitants of this vast Continent are thorily Convinc,d, as also of the advantages they are now enjoying in consequence of it which I doubt not will be by them handed forward to Posterity, and Scarcely ever be forgotten.

Your agreeable Sister, desires me to inform you that she has lately wrote to you two letters, and that she has sent you two Dozen cakes of Soap, which went from here about a Month Past, That she is about making a small quantity more which she Purposes to forward to you by the first convenient oppertunity together with another letter for which Reason she omits writing now. my Wife makes the same excuse as to writing, but both say they Sincerely love you, as really does your Sincere and much Obligated Friend.

and most Humble Servant.

W.Greene

Docter Franklin

As was noted, Betsey (Hubbard) Partridge found fault with the reputed success Franklin had with the French ladies, for he takes the pains to send her [October 11, 1779] an explanation of French customs and manners which is more explicit than that which he gave his sister.

FRANKLIN AT PASSY TO ELIZA (HUBBARD) PARTRIDGE
AT BOSTON²¹

You mention the Kindness of the French Ladies to me. I must explain that matter. This is the civilest Nation upon Earth. Your first Acquaintances endeavour to find out what you like, and they tell others. If 'tis understood that you like Mutton, dine where you will you find Mutton. Somebody, it seems, gave it out that I lov'd Ladies; and then every body presented me their Ladies (or the Ladies presented themselves) to be *embrac'd*, that is to have their Necks kiss'd. For as to kissing of Lips or Cheeks it is not the Mode here, the first, is reckon'd rude, & the other may rub off the Paint. The French Ladies have however 1000 other ways of rendering themselves agreeable; by their various Attentions and Civilities, & their sensible Conversation. 'Tis a delightful People to live with.

From Passy, October 25, Franklin replied directly to Jane's letter of June 23 in which she commented with asperity on his accepting the embraces of the French ladies. Franklin freely admitted that he was in vogue at Paris and that he enjoyed the society and conversation of the French ladies, but said that most newspaper stories about him were without any basis in fact.

FRANKLIN AT PASSY TO JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AT
WARWICK²²

Passy Oct. 25. 1779

Dear Sister,

. . . The Account you had from Jona Williams of the Vogue I am in here, has some Truth in it. Perhaps few Strangers in France have had the good Fortune to be so universally popular: But the Story you allude to, which was in the News Papers, mentioning "mechanic Rust." &c is totally without Foundation. The English Papers frequently take those Liberties with me. I remember to have

once counted seven Paragraphs relating to me that came by one Post, all of which were Lies except one that only mentioned my living in the same House with Mr Deane. —This Popularity has occasioned so many Paintings, Busto's, Medals & Prints to be made of me, and distributed throughout the Kingdom, that my Face is now almost as well known as that of the Moon. But one is not to expect being always in Fashion. I hope however to preserve, while I stay, the Regard you mention of the French Ladies, for their Society and Conversation when I have time to enjoy it, is extreemly agreable.

The Enemy have been very near you indeed. When only at the Distance of a Mile you must have been much alarm'd. We have given them a little Taste of this Disturbance upon their own Coasts this Summer; and tho' we have *burnt none of their Towns*, we have *occasioned* a good deal of Terror & Bustle in many of them, as they immagined our Commodore [John Paul] Jones had 4000. Troops with him for Descents . . .

You very loving Brother.

B Franklin

My Love to Mr & Mrs Greene & to my young Friend Ray. Temple desires me to present you his Affectionate Respects.

As early as May 30, 1780, a French fleet was expected at Newport, for Stiles noted in his *Diary*:

Spent the Even^g with Mr [Henry] Marchant, with whom I visited his Excellency Gov. Greene this day come to [Newport] with the Marquis de la Fayette his Aid, taking measures respecting the French Fleet expected here. The Governor asked me to take care of a son [Ray] he intended to send to Y[ale] C[ollege] next Commencement.²³

Admiral de Ternay's fleet with 6,500 French troops under the Count de Rochambeau anchored in Newport Harbor, July 10, 1780. This body of well disciplined and well equipped soldiers was an important, indeed vital, reinforcement to the Continental army under Washington. The General Assembly, then in session at Newport, directed Governor William Greene and Deputy Governor William Bradford to present, on its behalf, addresses of welcome to the French.

One can well imagine the relief and excitement of the people of Rhode Island, who had been living in fear from the time the British occupied Newport, December 8, 1776, until the evacuation, October 25, 1779. Now their fears were at an end.

For some reason which is not clear, it was more than two months after the arrival of the French before they met with Washington to decide on the plan of campaign. Washington met de Ternay and Rochambeau at Hartford, September 18, 1781. There it was decided that because of a lack of sufficient sea power the army should pass the winter in passive observation. For the French officers the monotony of camp life was broken by a round of social festivities. One can be sure that Caty Greene, always so fond of company, participated whenever possible.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PASSY.²⁴

Warwick Decbr ye 28th 1780

My Very Dear Friend

Haveing an oppertunity from Providence to write you I Gladly Embrace it as I know it, will give you Pleasure to hear we are Well, And have not fell in to the hands of the Britons as we have been fearfull we Should living So near the Shore and Spoues So Warm a Whigg but them fears are at an End Since We are So Strongly guarded by our New Allies. Who we are much Pleasd With there Politeness & Strong Atachment to America is Very indearing. Count Rochambo We Particularly Regard the more as he Says he loves Us and he is Clever to every body

Admiral Turney Who Died in Newport a few days Past We have Reason to Lament As he was exceedingly kind to our Son Ray who has been on Board his Ship more than a month to learn French he had Studied it Some at School and there was a Vacancy of 4 or 6 Weeks and his father thought he had better improve that time in learning French than to be Idle. there Was a Transport going to France from Newport and he wrote you his Scituation he is to be under Doctr Stiles at Newhaven Collidge goes in January

The Uncertainty of a letters Reaching you makes me Seldom write but be Assurd I love you as Dearly as ever and hope that Providence will favor us with yr Safe Return to New England Where we Will Welcom you with our Hearts & our Hands and Sugar Plumbs too—I with Pleasure look Back Upon those Pleasant days I used to See you in Boston and the A Greeable Journey to Westerly which you have Some times Mentiond But my Connections there are Chiefly Lost Some Buried and Some Strange Could you believe Mrs Partridge and yr friend are not Upon Terms this War has made Strange Rack of Friendship as Well as Properties But Heaven Will Set all write in Due time.

Tis long Very long Since We have had a line from you as to my own Part dont expectt it but Seldom as I know yr Deeply inguagd in your Countres Cause & your Correspondants without Number but yr Dear Sister Who I know you Dearly love has also been Deprivd of that Comfort her Granddaughter Sets out to be a Notable house Wife as well as Propogator of her Species She has had 3 Children 2 living the yongest a fine yong Franklin who we Wish to inherit his uncles Virtues he is at Present afflicted with a Breaking out I mention all this as it Deprives me of my good friends Company for She is as much Enguagd in Raising the third Generation as She was the

first She writes you by this oppertunity So Shall Add
My Spoues and Childrens Most Affectionate Regard, to
you and yr lovely Grand Children with you Heavens
Bless you All hope the Ladies Continues there Regards
to you they wait for my letter So you will Permit me to
Subscribe

My Self yr Very affectionate
friend Caty Greene

A few days later, having another opportunity to send a letter, Caty wrote again. She praised the French troops, commenting favorably on their splendid discipline. Caty had written the same thing to Mrs. Sarah Bache who in turn forwarded it to her father January 14, 1781.

SARAH (FRANKLIN) BACHE AT PHILADELPHIA TO
FRANKLIN AT PASSY²⁵

Mrs Greene in a late letter to me says "the French Troops in Rhohd Island, are under such strict disapline that the inhabitants suffer but very little from them, the Officers have Won many of the Tory Ladies, that could not bear the thoughts of their coming, they are very high in our Books . . . !"

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PASSY²⁶

Warwick Jany Ye 1st 1781

My Very Dear Friend

I a few days a go wrote you two Sides of a Sheet of Paper and Sent it to Newport to go by this oppertunity but have Since heard the Vesel has not gone from Providence and least my other letter Should fail I do my Self the Pleasure to write a few lines more Just to ask you how do you do my good Friend do you injoy health and

Shall we ever be So happy as to See you again in New England. Tis Long Since we have had a line from you but will not Suppose you have not wrote to any of yr friends But Lay all to the Savage Britons; Tounge Cant express the one half of the Distresses they have made us feel Murdering Butchering Starving Stealing there is no Evil Can be Namd but they have Practised in America this once Peacefull happy Land—But in our State we are happily Deliverd from them Since the Arival of our New Allies they are Very Clever and we love them. there Soldiers are under the Best Disapline at 9 oClock the Streets are as Still as though there was not a Soldier in them they are Supprised to find every thing So high but there is a Very great Plenty of Provisions of every Sort Cyder last Summer was Carted 30 miles to Newport French Crowns being Rather more Esteemd than *Continental* I want Spoues to write you all our Publick matters But he dont Choose to least they Should fall into the Enemies hands But his Best Regards to you and every wish for your happiness. My Children all Joyns us in love to you and your Dear Children Ray has wrote you how he is on board the Admiral &c to learn French your good Sister has wrote you by this oppertunity So that I dont mention her more than that we love her and when we Visit we have a feast talking of you A Very happy New Year to my Worthy friend Concludes

your Honest

Catharine Green

At the end of January Governor Greene gave John Murray a letter of introduction to Franklin. Caty added a hurried post-script once more asking him to write to his sister Jane, who was anxious to hear from him. Benedict Arnold, in command of a British force, had burned Richmond, Virginia, the preceding December.

WILLIAM AND CATHARINE GREENE AT WARWICK TO
FRANKLIN AT PASSY²⁷

Warwick State Rhode Island &c 31st January 1781

Sir/

This will be handed to you by the ~~bearer~~ Mr John Murray a young Gentleman whose Friends are in England from whom he has been absent in America ever since his infancy, he having resided Principely within this State, have had an oppertunity of being inform,d with respect to his Charecter. Do therefore recommand him to your Particular Notice.

Have nothing very meterial that I think will be prudent to communicate as it is uncertain into whose hands this may fall, save that one of the British Ships a few Days pass,d being the Coloden of seventy four guns went on shore upon long Island and is stranded. likewise a fifty gun Ship is dismasted

Your Sister is with her Grand Daughter Greene and two great Grand Children, they together with my Family are well, who desire their sincere regards and pleas to except the same from your sincere Friend and most Humble Servant.

W. Greene

My Very Dear Friend

Mr Greene Writes you in the Greatest hurry a Person waiting for his letter and Several Persons waiting to Do Business. I wrote you by Capt Jenkins two letters not expeckting the first to go hope they will both Come Safe and hope you will favor us with a line When will you Come home we long to See you Exceedingly we have not had a line from you this year your Poor Sister is quite impatient to hear from you but is Very well and we love and Comfort her all we Can the Wicked Wretched Arnold

is in Virginia with 18 hundred men and has Ravagd
 Richmond My hurry is So great Cant write more than
 that I love you Dearly
 yr friend Sincere
 C Greene

Possibly the newspaper which Caty enclosed in her June 24 letter to Franklin was the June 9 issue of the *Providence Gazette*, since it contains a report that Admiral de Grasse on April 29 had broken the line of battle of the British fleet commanded by Admiral Hood. The issue of June 16 reported that Lord Rawdon after burning Camden had retreated to Charleston and that Cornwallis was retiring there from Wilmington.

Lacking Franklin's letter of introduction, one is unable to identify the two French officers here referred to by Caty in hers of June 24. The French troops passed through Providence June 18 on their way to the rendezvous with Washington at Wethersfield, Connecticut.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
 AT PARIS²⁸

Warwick June ye 24th 1781

My Very Dear Friend

I did my Self the Pleasure to write you a Postcrip in Spoues letter by mr Austin of Newhaven a few days Past but am now at Providence where an oppertunity Presents of Sending my letter to morrow that I write you a gain as the other may Miscary and if it does not it will inform you of all our health and the Continuance of our Sincere love and affection for our Beloved *Benjamin*—you will not think Ive Commenst Quaker becose Ive taken the Same Liberty with you before

I wrote you Id Receivd yr favor Recomending those two Gentlemen Sons of that Worthy Lady that I wrote them as Polite a Billet as was Capable of wishing them to

Spend Some time with us which they Designd doing but there Persute is Honour and they feard there might be Some movement in there absence and did not honour us with a Viset they are now on there March to head quarter the ~~house~~ family they lodgd in in Provedence Speaks highly of them as they do of the officers in General Never was a Set of men Could be have better than they have Since in our State every family thinks there officer the Best we all wish to Speak French there is Numbers of them that has learnt English So as to Convers Very well I inclose you a Paper that you may See the good News from the Southward if you have not had it by other hands We are high in expecktation that this Camppain will Compleet our Wish and Pray Set out for home as we may Rejoice to gether on our Deliverance from the British yoke. The French go Determend from this Plaice to take New york Heavens give them Success We are Surprised at the Baggage they Cart throw the Country I askt our Gentlemen why they did not advise them to Carry there Baggage by Water as far as harford oh they Sayd they were Such old Waryers and we So yong they would not think we knew any thing of the matter they Choose to go Safe how do your Dear Children do when did you See Benny you mentiond his Drawing I wish to See Some of it

your Dear Sister is tolerable well but exceeding Desireous to have a letter from her only Brother her Second Self tis long Since She has had a line from you there is a great deal of talking Round me excues Blunders

from your most affectionate
friend
Caty Greene

tis beyond Discription
 the Difficulties our People
 have gone throw to the
 Southward I wish I Could
 Send you Some of the accounts
 but I Believe you hear Dismals enough
 we are now in good Spirits
 your Dear Sister took great Pains to get
 the Sermon you wrote for Sent the Page
 to mr Williams in Boston to try there
 but he writes her he fears tis lost
 throw the hurry of the Weding
 yr Sincer

C G

we dont none of
 us know how to Subcribe
 a letter to you Proper So you will excues the Plain way

At last even Caty took notice of the continuing reports of Franklin's devotion to the French ladies, and her jealousy was roused by his failure to write to her for a very long time. In her letter to Franklin on October 7, 1781, she has seemingly confused Admiral de Barras, in command of the French fleet at Newport, with the Count de Grasse, who had defeated British Admiral Graves on September 5 at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. This confusion is readily understandable because she knew that de Barras had succeeded to the command of the French fleet, which had sailed from Newport to the Chesapeake. In all probability she had never heard of de Grasse.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
 AT PASSY²⁹

My Dear Friend Warwick Octobr ye 7th 1781

Will you believe I grow Very Jealous of you I fear the french Ladies have taken you intirely from us for we dont have a Single line from you this long Very long time

the last letter I had was Recommending the two French Gentlemen have wrote you of them hope that good Lady enjoys health will long Continue a Blessing to all arround her yr good Sister has been Very un happy in not Receiving a line from you in So long a time but She is now gone to Boston to get a little Comfort for She thinks mr Willms has heard from you Certain [torn] there is an application to me from a Lady in [Newp]ort to write you that one of your Brother James grand Sons Mr Isaac Allin is a Prisoner in England he belongs to the Ship morning Star was taken and Caried to Charls town 3 month then Carried to New york 5 month a Prisoner then Carried to England they Doubt not yr assistance in deavoring to get him Releast if you Could know where he was I believe he is a Worthy Character he is much lamented by his friends We have Pleasing accounts from the Southward that Admiral Barras has Given the English fleet a good Banging and that lord Corn Wallis and his army is taken [Oct. 19, 1781] tis not Confirmd by Charls Thomson yet but expeckt it every moment We are all well and Join in our Best wishes that health and happiness may attend you and that you may Return in Safety to america Spoues is allways inguagd in Publick matters he would write you Some times our affairs but there is So many Chances of the letters being taken and thinks that you have all our accounts from authority that he does not love too [write] love to yr Dear Children they Say Ray is a good Scholar I write in a great hurry as the Person waits and tis a Very Cold morning this from yr affectionate friend

Caty Greene

the French going
from Newport is Very
Grievous for they was
much belovd by the in
habitants

Accompanied by her daughter Celia, Caty paid a visit to Betsey Partridge at Boston in the late fall of 1781. Evidently they had made up their quarrel of the previous year and were again "upon terms." Betsey had written to Franklin, December 6: "Our Friend Mr^s Green has been in Town, with one of her Daughters, She is Well & Happy in her Growing Family; She has two Fine Grand Sons, She Returned home Yesterday, but left her Daughter with us, who is an Amible Girl."³⁰

The Count de Segur about whom Franklin wrote Caty, April 7, 1782, was Louis Phillippe, son of Henri Phillippe de Segur, French Minister of War. Louis Phillippe left Paris for Brest early in April on his way to America.³¹

FRANKLIN AT PASSY TO CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE
AT WARWICK³²

Passy, April 7. 1782.

My Dear Old Friend:—

If the Comte de Ségur, son of the Minister of War, should happen to be in your neighborhood, I recommend him warmly to your civilities and friendship, and to those of the good governor. You will find him as amiable and deserving as any of the French officers whose good conduct you so much applauded last year. I continue as hearty and well as when you first knew me, which, I think, is near thirty years, though perhaps you will not care to own so much. Make my respectful compliments to Mr. Greene, give my love to my friend Ray, and believe me ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. Franklin.

The death of her granddaughter, Jenny Greene, with whom she had lived since 1777, was such a shock to Jane Mecom that her life was despaired of; yet she rallied. Jane had not heard from her brother in more than a year, and Caty begged Franklin to send her a note, as word from him would renew her courage.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PASSY³³

My Very Dear friend

Warwick May ye 8th 1782

I do my Self the Pleasure to write you though I know of no oppertunity to Send it. but a few days a go the inclosed was Sent to be forwarded to you and as Im fond of writeing to My Dear friend I have taken the incloseing of it upon my Self I Some [time] Since wrote you of the Same Person by his mothers Request which if it has Come to hand Doubt not but you have taken Care about him I have a favor to ask of the Same Nature Sister Hubbarts yongest Son a Lad of about 13 years old is a Prisoner in Ireland taken with Capt Rathbone from Boston Poor Child we Should be Glad to have him Restord again he is Very yong to go into the World

Your Dear Sister I Visited yesterday She injoys great health for a Person of her age But She has met with a Shock in the Death of Mrs Greene who Died of a Short Consumption a bout 4 weeks a go that we did not expeckt She would have Survivd but a Very little while her anxtiety was So great for her but She bears it beyond what we expeckted She left 3 Children the yonget a bout 8 or 10 weeks old at Nurs the name Jane the other 2 fine Children at home Sally and Franklin Poor Girl we all lovd and lament her.

My Spoues and Children are well that are at home we expeckt Ray from Colledge in a few days he is under Doctr Stiles they Say he is a good Scholar and behaves well our yongest Son [Samuel Ward] at latin School a bout Seven miles from home our eldest Daughter [Phebe Ward] has 2 of the finest boys you would wish to See our yonget [Celia] lives with us Single as a good girl oght to do except all there love with mine and Best wishes for yr health and hapiness and a Safe Return to



FIG. 7. Miniature of Ray Greene painted by Edward Greene
Malbone ca 1800 Coll. Nancy Lyman Roelker.



FIG. 8. Silver "G" from the
door of Governor Greene's
carriage. Coll. of the editor.

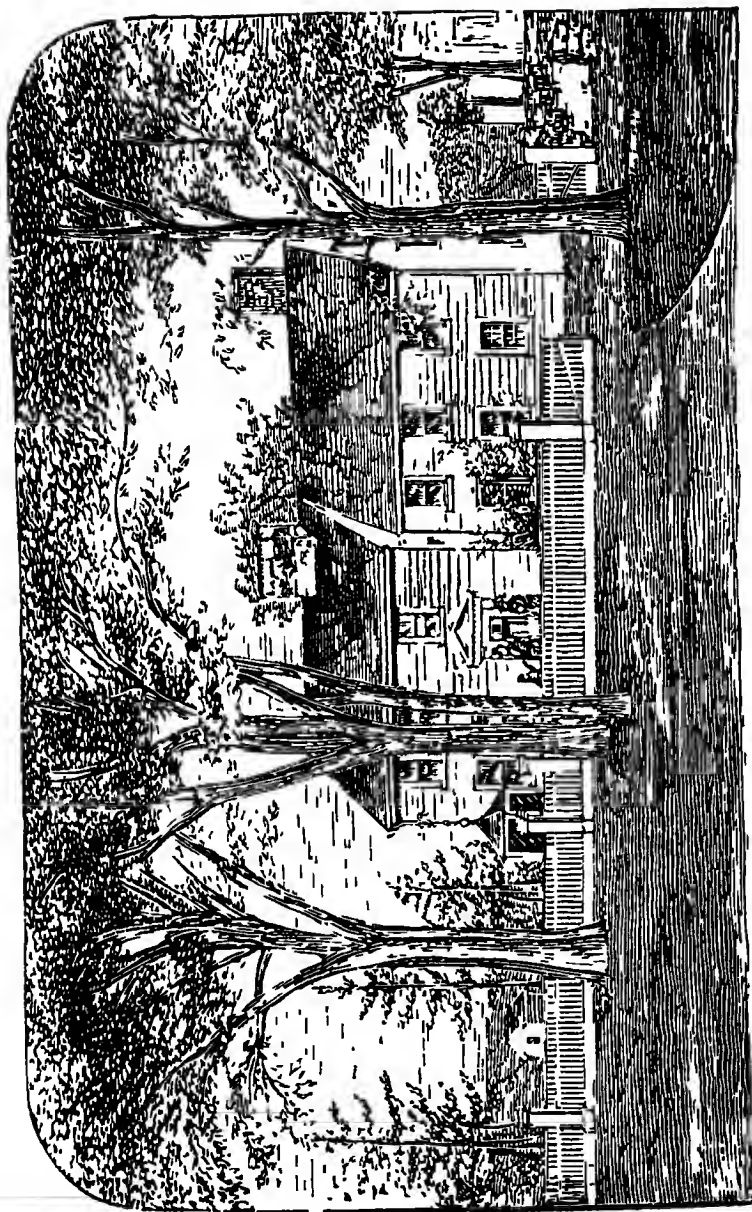


FIG. 9 The Greene homestead, from a woodcut of ca 1875 in Oliver Payson Fuller *The History of Warwick, Rhode Island* (Providence, 1875) To the right of the gateway is a mounting-block.

America the last letter I was favord with from you was Recomending the two Jermin [French] Colonels we Sent them a kind invitation to our house but they was So attentive to there Regiments that they never did us the Pleasure of there Company I hope there good mama will have them Restord to her again they are Spoke of in Newport as Very Worthy officers. So are the whole army from the Generalls to the Privats they are heartily wisht for again

How does our Dear Temple and Beney do Sister Mecom and my Self talke of them Some times and wish to know of there improvements but more to See them but the Dear Lady tis So long Since She has had a line from you that She Can Scarcely Speak of you with out a tear She does not Doubt but you have wrote but tis more than 12 months Since She has Receivd a line from you but from you throw mr Willms a Very handsom Present which was Very acceptable as She had with the Rest of us lost by Paper money the family are Very tender of her She is So fond of the Children that I fear it will be a Disadvantage to both She thinks She Cant leave them to Visit us Scarcely

Mr Elery writes mr Greene when there is any letters from you and how well and Strong yr facultis Continue. Pray Shew us by a few lines you dont know what a New Spring it would give us when is this Cruel War to be at an end you know you used to be a Conjurer—you are Willing by this

I Should Subcribe my Self your
Very affectionate friend Caty Greene

Shortly after the preceding letter was sent off, Caty had the opportunity of sending another note to Franklin on the occasion of Governor Greene's writing a routine letter to ask Franklin to use his influence in obtaining the release of Ezekiel Durfey.

WILLIAM AND CATHARINE GREENE AT WARWICK TO
FRANKLIN AT PASSY³⁴

Warwick State Rhode-Island && June 25th, 1782.

Sir

I am informed that Ezekiel Durfey a small officer on board of the Ship Tracy commanded by John B Hopkins was taken and carryed to Newyork and from there to England, where he has been confined about eighteen Months, and by the last account he was in Mill Prison, his Friends have very earnestly requested me to inform your Excellency of his distressed situation and request that you will be pleased to use your influence that he may be liberated. Being sencible of the great business you have to transact and likewise that it is very probable that you have many of those applications, it is very disagreeable to ask this favour, but as his Friends have urged the necessity of this measure by assigning as a reason that they have tryed many ways to procure his liberty without the least degree of success and being sencible of your good intentions to relieve Mankind when in captivity has induce me to take this liberty.

My spous writes a Postscript and my Children Joins me in sending their Sincere regards and believe me to be your Sincere Friend

and very Humble Servt

W.Green

My Very Dear Friend

I wrote you a few days Since of your good Sisters and Tolerable health & Poor Jennies Death Particulars of our family &c but Mr Greenes writeing I must add a kind how do you do when did you here from Benny and is temple well and when do you Come to New england and ask when this Shocking War will be at an end the Sceenes of Misery it has occationd is beyond Discription our State has felt

it Severely having So long a Sea Coast to guard but Ile not trouble you with the Disagreeables our hope is now that the times is Just at hand when we Shall Drive them Root and Branch from our land our Children are Tollerable well I told you in my other letter Particulier of them that Ray was a Pretty Promising Lad at New haven Colledge

Samey at lattin School 7 miles from home and that I wisht for Peece of Beney's Drawing excues the interlineing &c for I wrote hurried but believe me your Very affectionate freind. C Greene I wonder if you get half the letters I write for you dont for bid me and I write again—

The letter of introduction, which Franklin had given to the Count de Segur, was forwarded to Caty from Philadelphia. From Caty's letter of December 5, 1782, one would be led to believe that the Count had arrived at Providence with the French troops on November 11 and had then proceeded to Newport.

His *Memoirs* make it clear, however, that when the French army was some distance from Providence, he and the Prince de Broglie had received permission from Rochambeau to make an excursion to New London. Thence they proceeded to Newport about which they had heard so much from the officers who had been there in 1780-1781. "On seeing Newport it was easy to understand the regret felt by the French army on quitting that pretty town where it had so long sojourned," de Segur wrote. "Time glided on so agreeably at Newport, that we were not anxious to hasten our return to our tents . . . But M. de Rochambeau, who knew all the importance of a strict adherence to discipline, despatched positive orders for us to join immediately our respective regiments; we therefore reluctantly quitted Newport, and quickly proceeded to our headquarters which were then at Providence."³⁵ If the Count de Segur was loathe to go to Providence, then a town of some 5,000 inhabitants, he would scarcely be enthusiastic about a visit to the Greene homestead in remote and socially isolated Warwick! The heavy rain which prevented him from visiting the Greenes could not have been unwelcome.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PASSY³⁶

My Very Dear Friend Warwick Decbr ye 5th 1782

Have been favord with your letter by Count Segar. which he forwarded from Philadelphia he Came to Providence with the Army we Sent for him but [he] was gone to Newport on his Return to Providence Ray was at home and waited on him he Sat a day to Come with Count Rhoshambow but it was a heavy Rain for three days. after that the first Coll[umn] went to Boston and he Said it was imposible to Come for they are extreem attentive to there Duty—

yr Curious friend went to Providence to See the Novelty—and Sent for the Count to See her was Very much Pleasd with him and lamentd not haveing an oppertunity of a farther acquantance and Shewing him every Civility in our Power he Says his Wife Visits you and Plays Chex but yr So Galant you Never beat her the officers Says they are the happiest Couple in France Pray my Regards to her being one of her Spoues admirers he is So Sensible Sociable and Polite but all this you know—yr Dear Sister is gone to Boston to Spend the Winter She grows infirm Mrs Greenes Death and not haveing a letter from you a long time makes her low Spirited I Comfort her all I Can Remembering her of your Six Reasons in a former letter our family are all well and Joyn me in the tenderest Regards and Best Wishes for yr health and happiness

Ray is at College learning as fast as he Can that he may Come to France when he Comes out of Colege he has enterd his 3^d year he is Spoke highly of by the President and Tutors hope he will make a good man the Count Speaks highly of yr Grandson I want a Peice of Beney's Drawing is he Still at Genevia are you well when do

you Come to New England and make all our hearts Glad
 We long for Peice for the inhabitants of this State are
 and have been exceedingly Distrest and loosing Most all
 our Vesels are Very Poor but the French troops have
 greatly Releavd us from have ing the Militia on the Shore
 we are greatly indebted to them—old uncle Tuthill [Hub-
 bard] has an Heir in his old age—Thomey lives to Tor-
 ment Sukey [Susannah Hubbard] and Mrs Partridg are
 living but not to there Brothers Children

this from your affectionate Friend

Caty Greene

Spoues and Daughters
 love you Dearly believe
 every body does

When Caty wrote Franklin on December 26, the French troops had already embarked at Boston on their way home. She recounted to Franklin some news of the family, in particular that Jane Mecom had gone to Cambridge to spend the winter with her daughter Mrs. Jane Collas.

Caty sent her letter (December 26, 1782) by the hand of John Wheelock, son of Eleazar and second president of Dartmouth College, who visited France in 1783 for the purpose of raising money for the College. Even though de Segur had spurned the Greene's invitation to visit them, the president of Yale and his bride did not. Dr. Stiles had married October 17, 1782, Mrs. Mary (Cranston) Checkley, widow of William Checkley and daughter of Benjamin Cranston of Newport. They visited the Greenses on October 29.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
 AT PASSY³⁷

Warwick Decbr ye 26th 1782

My Very Dear Friend

I did my Self the Pleasure to write you A few days
 Since by Count Segar by his Request, was exceedingly
 Pleasd with him and wisht him to Spend a good deal of

time with us but they are So attentive to there Duty that they allow them Selves but little time to Ramble he Says his wife is Neighbour to you and She Visits you often you Play Chex with her but you are So gallant you will not beat the Ladies She Seams to me like an acquaintance as She loves & Vists My good freind me thinks She is like a Daughter to you we hear the French troops are on board we Pity them as it must be Very Disagreeable being on board So many together this Disagreeable Weather but the more they Suffer the higher our obligation they have been So Polite to the inhabitants that there Departure is generally Lamented

We are happy to hear you injoy So great a Share of health Pray heaven to Continue it to you and every Blessing—our family is well except our Daughter Ward who is a bed a week with a third Son [Henry] the Branches of that family are well that are left and Samy [Ward] makes a good Husband and Son yr Dear Sister Spends the Winter with her Daugter She has I hope before this been made happy in a letter from you we heard of one on the Rhode here but a Persen forwarded it to her She has long wisht for that Pleasure Mr Willms who Suppose with you by this will tell you of her health &c when do you Return to New England

Your Friends [Caty Greene's] love for Learning and her anxciety for the Riseing Generation makes her wish that the Bearer Mr President Whelock may Succeed in the Business he is upon, he is a Person Universally esteemd and his heart and Soul is in the Seminary he now applies to you for Doubt not he will meet with yr freend Ship and assistance Ray is at College Doctr Stiles was to Vist us with his Bride we talkd of you and all love you if love would keep People alive what a monstous age would our friend live too

do when you have leisure write a few lines to us and any friend that you think would be Pleas'd with our Plane manner we Shall be happy to have an oppertunity to Shew every Civility too this from your affectionat and

obligd freend

Caty Greene

Jane Mecom spent the winter in Cambridge with her daughter and on April 29, 1783, wrote Franklin.

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AT BOSTON TO FRANKLIN
AT PASSY³⁸

. . . Porpose to go to the State of Rhoad Island in about a Fortnight to Spend the Summer I think if you come to America & come this way you will not Fail to call on me & our Good Friend Greene She Desiered me long ago to tell you how Happy She was in the Acquaintance of Some Gentleman you Recomendend to them, how Exactly He ansured yor Discription, but I then forgot it & cant now Remember the Name. I heard from there Lately they are all well have an increce of Grand children which makes them very Happy

From Boston she wrote to Sarah Bache on May 18.

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AT BOSTON TO SARAH
(FRANKLIN) BACHE AT PHILADELPHIA³⁹

I have been with them [the Collas's] all winter at Cambridge, and am returning there this day, but shall go to Rhode Island state in about a week, to spend the summer, where I have spent some happy years; but the scene is much altered by the death of a most desirable granddaughter, who left three sweet children to my care. Her husband is a very good man, but nothing can repair my loss.

While most of the Franklin-Greene correspondence is of a personal nature, there are some few semi-official letters addressed by Franklin to Governor Greene. Such is the letter introducing M. de Bannes, whom it has been impossible to identify.

FRANKLIN AT PASSY TO WILLIAM GREENE AT WARWICK⁴⁰

Passy, 20. May 1783

Dear Sir,

The Bearer, M. de Bannes is exceedingly well recommended to me by Persons of the first Distinction in this Country. He goes over to America with a View of seeing the Country, and of being serviceable to the Government here, who may hereafter probably confer on him one of the Consulships. He appears to be a sensible Young Man, & will, I doubt not, make himself agreeable. Permit to request for him your kind Notice & Civilities, & that you will favour him with your best Counsels, if he should at any time stand in need of them.

With great & sincere Esteem, I have the honour to be,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient

& most humble Servant.

B Franklin

Among the Ward transcripts are three letters from Caty to Jane Mecom written in the year 1784. In that of January 16 Caty asks particularly for news "of our Dear Friend,"⁴¹ as she calls Franklin. And on February 12 she begs Jane: "do write me how you all do and when you heard from our Dear friend how his health is."⁴² The third is dated "August after the 22^d forget y[ear]." She writes: "Ray and Celia is gone to Commencement he takes his degree . . . the President gives a good account of him. . . ." ⁴³ Stiles *Diary* records that "Sir Greene son of Gov. Greene of Rh Isld" had a part in the Dialogue at Public Commencement, September 8, 1784.⁴⁴ In a postscript to a letter of October 21 Jane Mecom tells her brother: "our Friend madam

Greene allways Inquiers after you and desiers to be Remembred."⁴⁵

Franklin was on his way home when Caty had the pleasure of a visit from Jane Mecom. In order that he might have the latest news of his sister, Caty wrote to Sarah Bache, knowing that she would show the letter to her father on his arrival.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO SARAH
(FRANKLIN) BACHE AT PHILADELPHIA⁴⁶

Warwick, August 20th, 1785-

Dear Madam.

I hope, before the receipt of this, you will have had the pleasure of receiving in health the best of fathers, your amiable son & cousin. Though not present, I shall partake of the joy. I had the pleasure of a visit from your good aunt, when she recd your favor of July past. It gave her pleasure and pain—pleasure to her good brother was so soon expected, that your son was so much improved, that you had so fine an offspring &c but pain lest the voyage might prove too hard for his disorder: But, I pray Heaven may restore [him] safe to America. My tenderest regards to him: When I hear of his arrival I shall by a line bid him "welcome! welcome." . . . Ray is studying Law: he always speaks of you and family with affection: accept his love: I have three grand children living, and buried one

Your affectionate friend

Caty Greene

I wrote you the number of grand-children, because I was so desirous of hearing your number [and] there names: the names of mine are Billy, Sammy and Harry there! a grandmas fondness!

During the Revolution the British navy nearly succeeded in severing communications with America. In 1778 Governor

Greene sent three sets of bills of exchange to Franklin at Paris; only two of them arrived. The next year the Congress in four different vessels forwarded Franklin's commission as sole minister plenipotentiary to France; only the set entrusted to Lafayette got through. It is remarkable that approximately forty letters have survived from the period when Franklin was in France (October, 1775-May, 1785).

The letters in this chapter are notable because they demonstrate that Franklin had the inclination, and above all found the time, to indulge in private correspondence. Apparently without hesitation he accepted a commission from Governor Greene to purchase some goods for his private account and had Jonathan Williams at Nantes complete the transaction. While this may have been an exception, one may infer that if Franklin accepted such a commission from Governor Greene, he was also obliged to accommodate other friends.

Writing these personal letters took time, and the favors he did for his friends involved both financing and bookkeeping. Franklin was always short of funds and had but little clerical assistance. The heavy burden of the mission to France was largely carried on his own shoulders, with the assistance of his grandson Temple. The load would have been too much for anyone but a man like Franklin, yet he carried it and had time to remember his old friends.

1. Adams, John, *Works*, Charles Francis Adams ed., I: 660, Boston, Little, Brown, 1856.

2. Parton, *Life and Times*, II: 281.

3. Eliza Partridge, Boston, Oct. 28, 1777, to Franklin at Paris.

4. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Boston, Oct. 28, 1777, to Franklin at Paris.

5. Diary of Ezekiel Price, *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register* 19: 332, 1865.

6. Franklin, Paris, Feb. 28, 1778, to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick.

7. Jane Mecom, Potowomut, April, 1778, to Jane Collas at Boston.* *N. E. Hist. and Gen. Soc.*

8. Jane Mecom, Warwick, May 5, 1778, to Franklin at Paris. *Hist. Soc. of Penna.*

9. Jane Mecom, Warwick, May 16, 1778, to Jane Collas at Boston. Copy made by William Duane. *N. E. Hist. Gen. Soc.*

10. Jane Mecom, Warwick, Aug. 15, 1778, to Franklin at Paris.

11. William Greene, Warwick, Dec. 10, 1778, to Franklin at Paris.

12. Jane Mecom, Warwick, Jan. 4, 1779, to Franklin at Passy.

13. Franklin, Passy, Feb. 13, 1779, to Jonathan Williams at Nantes. Smyth, *Writings* VII: 229-230.
14. Franklin, Passy, June 4, 1779, to William Greene at Warwick.
15. Jane Mecom, Warwick, June 23, 1779, to Franklin at Passy.
16. Jane Mecom, Warwick, July 27, 1779, to Franklin at Passy.
17. Jane Mecom, Warwick, Sept. 12, 1779, to Franklin at Passy.
18. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Sept. 19, 1779, to Franklin at Passy.
19. Jane Mecom, Warwick, no date, to Sarah Bache, Phila * Yale University Library.
20. William Greene, Warwick, Oct. 5, 1779, to Franklin at Paris.
21. Franklin, Passy, Oct. 11, 1779, to Eliza Partridge at Boston. University of Pennsylvania Library.
22. Franklin, Passy, Oct. 25, 1779, to Jane Mecom at Warwick.
23. Stiles, *Diary* II: 427
24. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Dec. 28, 1780, to Franklin at Passy.
25. Sarah Bache, Phila. Jan. 14, 1781, to Franklin at Passy.* Yale University Library.
26. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Jan. 1, 1781, to Franklin at Passy.
27. William and Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Jan. 31, 1781, to Franklin at Passy.
28. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, June 24, 1781, to Franklin at Paris.
29. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Oct. 7, 1781, to Franklin at Passy.
30. Eliza Partridge, Boston, Dec. 6, 1781, to Franklin at Passy.
31. Segur, Count de, *Memoirs and recollections of Count Segur* I.270, London, H. Colburn, 1825.
32. Franklin, Passy, April 7, 1782, to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick. Smyth, *Writings* VIII: 419.
33. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, May 8, 1782, to Franklin at Passy.
34. William and Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, June 25, 1782, to Franklin at Passy.
35. Segur, *Memoirs and recollections* I. 357, 360-361.
36. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Dec. 5, 1782, to Franklin at Passy.
37. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Dec. 26, 1782, to Franklin at Passy. Hist. Soc. of Penna.
38. Jane Mecom, Boston, April 29, 1783, to Franklin at Passy.
39. Jane Mecom, Boston, May 18, 1783, to Sarah Bache, Phila.* Yale University Library.
40. Franklin, Passy, May 20, 1783, to Governor William Greene at Warwick.
41. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Jan. 16, 1784, to Jane Mecom at Boston.*
42. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Feb. 12, 1784, to Jane Mecom at Boston.*
43. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Aug. after 22d [1784], to Jane Mecom at Boston.*
44. Stiles, *Diary* III: 136.
45. Jane Mecom, Boston, Oct. 21, 1784, to Franklin at Passy.
46. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Aug. 20, 1785, to Sarah Bache at Philadelphia.* Yale University Library.

* Copies.

V. Twilight

1785 - 1790

FRANKLIN had been in France for nearly nine years, the most strenuous, yet the most enjoyable period of his life. Only a man of his versatility and shrewdness could have coped with the problems of conflicting personalities involved in the struggle to secure and maintain the French alliance.

By now he was in his eightieth year and suffering constantly from a stone in his bladder. But his heart, spirit, and courage were as young as ever. The voyage home was probably the most pleasant of the eight he had made. On the forty-ninth day, September 14, 1785, at last he was home in "dear Philadelphia." His son-in-law Bache came to meet him with a boat; "we landed at Market Street wharf, where we were received by a crowd of people with huzzas, and accompanied with acclamations quite to my door. Found my family well.

'God be praised and thanked for all His mercies!'"¹

The welcome home ceremonies continued to occupy him for the better part of a week. But his thoughts were with his sister and friends in New England, and in spare moments he wrote both to the Greens and to Jane Mecom

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO WILLIAM AND
CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK²

Philada Sept. 20. 1785.

I seize this first Opportunity of acquainting my dear Friends that I have once more the great Happiness of being at home in my own Country & with my Family, because I know it will give you Pleasure. I shall be glad to hear of your Welfare also, and beg you to favour me with a Line, and let me know particularly how my young Friend Ray does.—I enjoy, Thanks to God, as much good

Health as can reasonably be expected at my Time of Life;
and am ever, with sincere Esteem, my dear Friends

Yours most affectionately

B. Franklin

As was natural Franklin wrote to Jane before writing to the Greenes, but the letter is not extant. Her great relief at his safe arrival and her joy that he suffered so little during the long voyage are pictured in her reply to his letter. She does not fail, however, to give him a message from Caty, so closely are the two associated in her thoughts.

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AT BOSTON TO FRANKLIN
AT PHILADELPHIA³

Boston Sept 23- 1785

Blessed be God who has brought my Dear Brother Saif to his Desiered Porte, that has Ansured my Dayly Prayrs for his comfort & Ease, that you have had So good a Passage, & but won Days Illnes from the malidy, that Atends you. I never can be thankfull Enough for these perticulars; nor for His continual mercies to me which are all a long beyond my conception as well as Deserts

our friend Catheren Greene is the Same kind good Natuered creature She ever was (& So Indeed is the Governor & all the famely) She bids me Never forgit to Remember her to you when I write you will forgive all omissions & Deffects as I fear the Post will be gone before I can git it there & can only Add

God Bless you all to Gether forever

Prays yr Affectionat Sister

Jane Mecom

Caty did not answer Franklin's letter until October 8. Then, as usual, she was in a very great hurry, but her joy at his return fairly burst from the letter.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PHILADELPHIA⁴

Warwick Octbr ye 8th 1785

Welcom Exceedingly Welcom my Very Dear Friend to america. the Pleasing news gave me a Spring I Cant Decribe, happy your Friends and your family Particularly. May you injoy health and every Blessing to a Very great age

I injoy health and my family and am I beleive as happy as any of my acquaintance my Children all at home but Ray on a Viset he is iing Law and is Calld a Clever lad, Shall always think with gratitude of your attention to him you all ways Delighted to do good, I long to See you and was I to be So happy I Should take you by the hand and Sayd Pray dont except the Honour or Office yr People will Press upon you but your know best We think our Selves greatly Hond by your letter and now, Im going to Beg if your have one of your Picturs, the in mestints the Same Sise you gave me before for in the time of the War I Sint it a way and it met with a misfortune

excues blunders I write in a Very great hurry Shall go and Congratulate Sister Mecom on the good News My tender Regards to Mrs Bache and family except all my Childrens with your obligd and affectionate freind

Caty Greene

Caty was much moved by Franklin's return. On November 7, 1785, Jane wrote Franklin: "our Friend Cathrine Greene Expressd Such Lively Joy at the News of yr Arival that her children tould Her it had throⁿ her in to Hestericks but She Says She is not Subject to that Disorder She tells me you have Honor^d them [the Greens] with a Leter."⁵

Jane Mecom was a proud woman, who hated to be a burden to anyone. Her only means of support had been the tiny rent of the house at 19 Unity Street, Boston, which Franklin had given her.

Warwick Oct^r 8th 1785

Welcome Exceedingly Welcome my Very Dear
Friend to America, the Pleasing news gave me a
Joy I can't Describe, ²⁰⁹ Happy your Friends and ~~all~~
your family Particularly. May you enjoy health
and ~~all~~ every Blessing to a very great age
I enjoy health and my family and am I
believe as happy as any of my acquaintance my
Children all at home but Pray on a Foot he is

Living Low and is Cold a Fever had, shall
ways think with gratitude of your attention
to him you always Delighted to do good, I long to
see you and was I to be so happy I should take
you by the hand and say Pray don't expect the
Honour ~~your~~ or Office yr People will Push upon
you but your know best We think our selves
greatly Pleased by your letter and now, I'm going to
Pray if you have one of your Pictures, ~~the~~ in ~~my~~ ~~the~~
~~the same~~ ~~life~~ ~~you~~ gave me before for in the time of the
War I sent it a way and it met with a misfortune

excuse blunders I write in a Very great
hurry shall go and congratulate Mr. Mason
on this good News My tender Regards to Mrs
Packer and family except all my Children
with your obliged and affectionate friend

Cathy Greene

FIG. 10. Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick, October 8, 1785, to
Franklin at Philadelphia.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PHILADELPHIA⁴

Warwick Octbr ye 8th 1785

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I enjoy health and my family and am I beleive as happy as any of my acquaintance my Children all at home but Ray on a Viset he is iing Law and is Calld a Clever lad, Shall always think with gratitude of your attention to him you all ways Delighted to do good, I long to See you and was I to be So happy I Should take you by the hand and Sayd Pray dont except the Honour or Office yr People will Press upon you but your know best We think our Selves greatly Hond by your letter and now, Im going to Beg if your have one of your Picturs, the in mestints the Same Sise you gave me before for in the time of the War I Sint it a way and it met with a misfortune

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Warwick Oct^r 8th 1785

WELCOME Exceedingly Welcome my Very Dear
Friend to America, the Pleasing news gave me a
Joy as I Cant Describe, ²⁰Happy your Friends and ~~also~~
your family Particularly. May you enjoy health
and ~~every~~ every Blessing to a very great age

I enjoy health and my family and am I
believe as happy as any of my acquaintance my
children all at home but Pray on a Visit he is

Living Low and is Call'd a Flower Lad, shall
always think with gratitude of your attention
to him you always Delighted to do good, I long to
see you and was I to be so happy I should take
you by the hand and say Pray dont expect the
Honour ~~your~~ or Office yr People will Push upon
you but your know best We think our selves
greatly Glad by your letter and now, I'm going to
Pray if you have one of your Pictures, ~~the~~ in ~~my~~ ~~possession~~
this one ~~you~~ gave me before for in the time of the
War I sent it a way and it met with a misfortune

excuse blunders I write in a Very great
hurry shall go and Congratulate Mr. Mearns
on this good News My tender Regards to Mrs
Packer and family accept all my Children
with your oblig'd and affectionate friend

Cathy Greene

FIG. 10. Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick, October 8, 1785, to
Franklin at Philadelphia.

Franklin supplemented it by bountiful gifts, which Jane accepted thankfully. But her brother felt that in order to preserve her self-respect some means should be devised for her support. So he suggested that she begin to manufacture the Crown soap, which had been made by his father and brothers. On December 29, 1785, she sent Franklin sixty pounds of soap, which she had made "at our Friend Greenes in a Brass kettle,"⁶ presumably in Caty's great stone fireplace.

Letters passed frequently between Franklin and Jane in 1786, and there were probably some to Caty, though none has been found. Both women did everything possible to urge Franklin to pay them a visit in New England. Just why they did not journey to Philadelphia remains unanswered.

Encouraged by the improvement in his health as a result of the long voyage from France, Franklin soon after landing had accepted the office of President of Pennsylvania. In 1787 he consented to be named a delegate to the Constitutional Convention and was a regular attendant during the four months that it met.

He had hoped to be able to stand the journey to New York and even spoke now and then of going to Boston, in which case he would have stopped at Warwick to visit Caty. But a fall on the stone steps of his garden late in the autumn of 1787 greatly aggravated his malady and put an end to any hope of being able to visit his "two old women."

In November Caty paid a visit to Jane Mecom at Boston, and they "had a real feast on you you may rejoice you was not between us as we might Posibly each took a Peice." Mrs. Jane Collas, Jane Mecom's daughter, must have seen this letter for she wrote Franklin, November 11: "Should I ever have the happiness of Seeing you tho I would not bite a bit off you as Mrs. Gr—n Seems to long for, . . . I would Shove in among the croud, and if possible, touch the hem of your Garment . . ."

In May, 1786, Governor Greene had been defeated for reelection by John Collins, leader of the paper money party. Immediately on the organization of the General Assembly an emission of 100,000 pounds in paper money was voted. When these bills began almost immediately to depreciate, another act was passed

forcing debtors to accept the bills on the same basis as specie under penalty of a fine and loss of citizenship. This was "the depravity of the State" which mortified Governor Greene, a sound money man.

In her letter Caty brought Franklin up to date on the family happenings: that her youngest daughter Celia was married recently to a cousin, William Greene; that Phebe the eldest had been married for some years to Samuel Ward, Jr.; that Samuel Ward Greene was at college at Providence; and that Ray, who was graduated by Yale in 1784, "is at farming and is Very Steady indead "

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT BOSTON TO FRANKLIN AT
PHILADELPHIA⁸

My Dear good Friend

Boston Novbr ye 8th 1787

Im now on a Viset to your good Sister who I find Very Comfortable, and as much health as Can expeckt for a Person So far advanst. We have had a real feast on you you may rejoice you was not between us as we might Posibly each took a Peice My Stay is only three days in town as we expeckt Snow every day I only Came to Provedens for a Viset of a week and the fine Sun Shine invited me hear I go from hear to day the Parting is Painful but you used to Say if we did not go we Could not Come again have not Seen freinds Tuthil and Partidge the Bachelor [Tuthill Hubbard] was out and mrs Partridge the Committy on business Sukey much as in days Past my Neice, mrs [William] Gooch Very happy indead Just got into there New house built Since the fire [May 29, 1781] and geting Nesasaries So Cleverly My Spoues and family well when I left home he is exceedingly Mortified at the depravity of the State and a sufferer as an individual but we Cant help it and we will enjoy live as long as health Permits— have I told you we have married now our youngest Daughter Celia She lives in the town

below us has a good Husband our eldest Still lives with us though they wish to go out of the State but we Cant Part with them Ray is at farming and is Very Steady indead the yongest Saml is at Colledge at Provedence he is with me in town and will you Say yr a true mother when I tell you he is a Clever lad I hear a Pleasing account of all yr Decendants I wish to hear it from yr own lips but you dont intimate a hope of Comeing My best Regards to Mr & Mrs Bache love to the Children and Heavens Best of Blessing attend my much lovd friend Prays

yr affectionate and obligd
freind Caty Greene

Jane Mecom wrote to her brother and enclosed a letter from Caty (which has not been found) with the hope that letters "from us two old women" might divert him.

The flood of paper money emitted by the administration of Governor John Collins caused such a severe inflation of prices that it engendered the bitter hostility of the well-to-do. Madam Greene felt so strongly about it that she said she would not vote for her own brother. She was widow of John Rodman and third wife of Nathanael Greene, father of the Revolutionary General.

JANE (FRANKLIN) MECOM AT BOSTON TO FRANKLIN
AT PHILADELPHIA⁹

Boston Nov 9 - 1787

Dear Brother

I wrot you Lately which Mr Wouters took the care of & I Sopose you have recd but as he is now going himself & offers to take a Leter I will not omit writing tho it will as Useal be a baran Performance and to Inclose my Friend mrs Greenes, her Affection for you is really So grate that She Seems at a lose to Express it, the Leters from us two old women Proceeding from Such a cause, will be a Va-

riety & amuse you a litle under the Fatigue of Publick Business. She is the Same good harted creature She Ever was & with Some otheer Females in there State are afflicted with the Horrid Iniquity of the Publick Proceedings old maddam Greene mother in-law [step Mother] to my Grand-Son is Sister to Governor Collins but She Says if She had an Apron full of Voits to dispose of She would throw them all in Against her Brother,

you Percive we have Some quarilsome Spirits against the constatution but it does not apear to be those of Superior Judgment, my gratest comfort is God Reigns we are in His hands. we are as well as Usall & Joyn in Love & Duty to you & yrs with your

Affectionat Sister

Jane Mecom . . .

The last known letter from Caty to Franklin is dated December 10, 1787. She had had an enjoyable visit with Jane in Boston talking about Franklin.

She gave him news of Ray, who was running the family farm, and said her son-in-law Ward, husband of Phebe, had been made supercargo of John Brown's *General Washington*, first ship to sail from Narragansett Bay to China, December 26, 1787. He did not return to this country until July, 1789.

CATHARINE (RAY) GREENE AT WARWICK TO FRANKLIN
AT PHILADELPHIA¹⁰

My Dear Friend

Warwick Decbr ye 10th 1787

I last fall Sent you to the Care of mr Bache at New York a Small Bag of Sweet Corn, hope it Came Safe to hand, with this I Send you a nother which hope you will have as much Pleasure in eating as I have in Sending

I left a few lines with yr good Sister when in Boston to forward to you of how do you do &c, we had each of us a feast talking of you But Some aloy when you give no incoragement of Comeing to New England how glad it

would make many many hearts to See you how is yr health
 We hear from you by many People that you are Chearfull
 and Pleasant as may, but I long to hear from yr own hand
 that you are Comfortable but when I reflect the many
 Correspondents you have the multiplicity of Business I
 dare not Please my Self with the hope We are all well and
 love you youl be Pleasd to hear Ray is Very Smart in
 the farming way he has had from ten to Sixteen hands
 a day for a month Past Putting up monstrous Stone
 wall but to day tis So Cold they have Broke of he is out
 as is Spoues or would Join me and Daughter in the tender-
 est Regard to Self and family our Soninlaw Ward has the
 Consinment of a Ship to the East indees Sails in a few
 days

hear you have lovely Grand Children and take Great
 Pleasure in them. So have we they Seam as near as our
 own May they Continue lovely throw life is the wish of
 yr most affectionate and

obligd friend

Caty Greene

My friend mrs
 Bache was So friendly
 as to inquire after mrs
 Genl Greene Pleas to tell
 her She lives at Hartford near
 Coll Wadsworth he is Execketer to her
 husbands will. heard a few days Since
 She and Children were well.

Jane was troubled that Franklin did not recover from the
 effects of his fall. She wrote him September 26, 1788, "I can
 with Sincerity Say as our Friend Catey Said when She heard
 of yr fall I Should have been Glad to have borne Part of the
 Pain to have Eased my Dear Brother."¹¹

March 2, 1789, Franklin replied to Caty's letter. It was the
 last he ever wrote to her.

FRANKLIN AT PHILADELPHIA TO CATHARINE (RAY)
GREENE AT WARWICK¹²

Philada March 2, 1789

Dear Friend,

Having now done with Public Affairs which have heretofore taken up so much of my Time, I shall endeavour to enjoy, during the small Remainder of Life that is left to me, some of the Pleasure of Conversing with my old Friends by Writing, since their Distance prevents my Hope of seeing them again.

I received one of the Bags of Sweet Corn you were so good as to send me a long time since, but the other never came to hand; even the Letter mentioning it, tho' dated Dec. 10. 1787, has been above a Year on its way, for I receiv'd it but about two Weeks since from Baltimore in Maryland. The Corn I did receive was excellent, and gave me great Pleasure. Accept my hearty Thanks.—

I am, as you suppose in the above mention'd old Letter, much pleas'd to hear that my young Friend Ray is "*smart in the Farming Way*" and makes such substantial Fences. I think Agriculture the most honourable of all Employments, as being the most Independent. The Farmer has no need of popular Favour, nor the Favour of the Great. The Success of his Crops depending only on the Blessing of God upon his honest Industry. I congratulate your good Spouse that he as well as myself is now free from public Cares, and that he can bend his whole Attention to his Farming, which will afford him both Profit and Pleasure; a Business which no body knows better how to manage with Advantage. I am too old to follow Printing again myself, but loving the Business, I have brought up my Grandson Benjamin to it, and have built and furnish'd a Printing-house for him, which he now manages under my Eye. I have great Pleasure in the rest of my Grandchil-

dren who are now in Number eight, and all promising, the youngest only 6 Months old, but shows signs of great Good nature. My Friends here are numerous, and I enjoy as much of their Conversation as I can reasonably wish; and I have as much Health & Chearfulness as can well be expected at my Age, now 83. Hitherto this long Life has been tolerably happy,* so that if I were allow'd to live it over again, I should make no Objection, only wishing for Leave to do, what Authors do in a second Edition of their Works, correct some of my Errata. Among the Felicities of my Life I reckon your Friendship, which I shall remember with Pleasure as long as that Life lasts, being ever, my dear Friend,

Yours most affectionately

B Franklin

*(God grant it may so continue to the End)

No further letters between the two old friends, Caty and Franklin, have been found. In 1789 he was suffering so much with the stone that he was obliged to resort to opium to relieve the pain. The drug destroyed his appetite until little remained of him "but a Skeleton covered with a Skin."¹³ Caty was sixty-two, had borne six children, and had led the hard life of the wife of a farmer and a statesman during the Revolutionary period. She continued active until her death in 1794.

"I had a Leter from our friend Catey Greene by her [Sally Greene]," Jane wrote her brother April 2, 1789. "She all ways Inquiars after her Good *Old Friend* which is a Term you will like in Some Sense."¹⁴

July 23, Jane wrote him again: "our Friend Mrs Greene Recved yr Leter [March 2, 1789] She calls it a Dear good Leter & Says She will bring it when She comes to See me in the fall."¹⁵

But alas Jane never saw it! "our good old friend mrs Greene has been to See me to our Grat mortification She has Some how mislade your Leter She thought She Brought it but finds her Self mistaken."¹⁶ Jane wrote Franklin November 24, 1789.

After a long and painful illness Franklin died April 17, 1790. His son-in-law Richard Bache wrote to Jane to inform her of the sad event.

RICHARD BACHE AT PHILADELPHIA TO JANE (FRANKLIN)
MECOM AT BOSTON¹⁷

Philadelphia, April 19, 1790

Dear & Hond Madam

My duty calls upon me to make you acquainted with an event which I know will be a sore affliction to your affectionate Breast. And lest the news should reach you & be communicated to you in an abrupt manner & that your tender feelings might still be more wounded, I have thought it best to enclose these few lines to a friend, who I hope will first prepare you for the shock.—Amidst the affliction of a distressed Family, I am hardly connected enough to offer any consolation,—my condolence at present must suffice—And my dear Madam I do most sincerely condole with you on the loss of so excellent a friend & Brother—I have not time at present to add more, than that he died on Saturday last at 11 o'clock at night, he had not been long very ill, & therefore we had hardly an opportunity of informing you of it; besides we had been in daily expectation of his getting better,—but nature was at last worn out.—I beg of you to look upon me as your sincere Friend, & as one who will be very happy in rendering you any services in his Power—

I am

Dear Madam Your affectionate Kinsman

Rich. Bache

In Mrs. Mecom's hand:

to go into the Litle Trunk.

Caty died January 29, 1794. The following obituary notice is taken from the *Newport Mercury*, February 11, 1794.¹⁸

Died]—At Warwick, Mrs. Catharine Greene, Consort of William Greene, Esq. Perhaps there are few of her Sex who have possessed more extensive Powers of Mind, or discovered greater Excellence of Character, than Mrs. Greene; as few have acquitted themselves, in the endearing Relations of a Wife, a Mother, a Friend and Neighbour, with more Propriety and Amiability of Manners; varying and accommodating herself to all the Duties and Circumstances of domestic and social Life, with that unaffected Plainness and Dignity of Manners which flow from a benevolent heart, and which indicate true Elevation of Mind.—Having for the Course of near 40 Years given every Proof of conjugal Affection, of maternal Tenderness and Care, and of every Domestic Virtue, and having obtained a good Report in the Church of God, in which she held devout Communion, she closed a Life eminent for Industry, Usefulness and Piety, in the 63d Year of her Age.

Her standing in the family circle is illustrated by a letter from her nephew, Samuel Ward, to her niece, Kitty (Littlefield) Greene, whose husband General Nathanael Greene had died June 19, 1786.

SAMUEL WARD [AT NEW YORK] TO CATHARINE
(LITTLEFIELD) GREENE AT MULBERRY GROVE¹⁹

Dear Madam

. . . You can hardly have been informd of the loss of your Aunt Greene — this is a most serious calamity to the family and will cause you some regrets — . . .

Dear Madam

Your affection Cousin

Sam Ward

New York 19 Febr 1794

Mrs Cath Greene
Mulberry Grove
near
Savanna

* * * *

Thus time brought to a close the friendship of Caty and Franklin, which had survived so many obstacles. They met on but five occasions and always were obliged to correspond at long range, for years with the Atlantic Ocean with all its hazards between them. Many a friendship would have withered for lack of nourishment under these circumstances, but theirs continued full of vitality for more than a third of a century.

Franklin had a compartmented mind. When he sat down to write, he addressed himself directly to the subject and seldom wandered off near the end or in the postscript, as is the habit of so many letter writers. In his mind there was a compartment in which Caty was the central figure, and around her were the other members of her circle. The principals were her husband William, her son Ray, Franklin's sister Jane, and members of the Ward family.

When Franklin turned his thoughts to Caty, there came before his mind a stage with these persons alive upon it. He felt that he was there in person with them, and he wrote as if he were speaking to them face to face. Hence in the informality and intimacy of these letters one can find the real Franklin as he was when among his friends and intimates. A different person, indeed, from "Poor Richard" or the scientist or the statesman.

Franklin valued this friendship and intimacy and sought to recapture it. Even when in France, surrounded by the court and involved in matters of great national importance, he would turn his thoughts to Caty and her circle and feel once more the relaxation of being among friends before whom there was no necessity to pose. Lack of meetings, time, and distance were no obstacles to such a friendship. Such must have been his thoughts when he wrote Caty in his last letter :

Among the Felicities of my Life I reckon your Friendship,
which I shall remember with Pleasure as long as that Life
lasts, being ever, my dear Friend,

Yours most affectionately
B Franklin

1. Van Doren, *Benjamin Franklin*, 728.
2. Franklin, Phila., Sept. 20, 1785, to William and Catharine (Ray) Greene, at Warwick. Library of Congress.
3. Jane Mecom, Boston, Sept. 23, 1785, to Franklin at Phila.
4. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Oct. 8, 1785, to Franklin at Phila.
5. Jane Mecom, Boston, Nov. 7, 1785, to Franklin at Phila.
6. Jane Mecom, Boston, Dec. 29, 1785, to Franklin at Phila.
7. Jane Collas, Boston, Nov. 11, 1787, to Franklin at Phila.
8. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Boston, Nov. 8, 1787, to Franklin at Phila.
9. Jane Mecom, Boston, Nov. 9, 1787, to Franklin at Phila.
10. Catharine (Ray) Greene, Warwick, Dec. 10, 1787, to Franklin at Phila.
11. Jane Mecom, Boston, Sept. 26, 1788, to Franklin at Phila.
12. Franklin, Phila., March 2, 1789, to Catharine (Ray) Greene at Warwick.
13. Smyth, *Writings* X:35.
14. Jane Mecom, Boston, April 2, 1789, to Franklin at Phila.
15. Jane Mecom, Boston, July 23, 1789, to Franklin at Phila.
16. Jane Mecom, Boston, Nov. 24, 1789, to Franklin at Phila.
17. Richard Bache, Phila., April 19, 1790, to Jane Mecom at Boston. N. E. Hist. and Gen. Soc.
18. *Newport Mercury*, Feb. 11, 1794.
19. Samuel Ward, [New York], Feb. 19, 1794, to Catharine (Littlefield) Greene at Mulberry Grove.

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- Greene, Catharine (Ray), addressed by BF as "Katy", signed her name "Caty"; corresponds with BF 34 years, 1; born Block Island, 2; marries William Greene, 2, 30, intimate friend of Jane Mecom, 2; intimate with Hubbards of Boston, Wards of Westerly and Newport, and the Baches at Phila, 3, fond of company, 4; lacks formal education, 4; first meets BF at Boston, 6; journeys with BF to Newport, 7, visits Mrs. Anna (Ray) Ward near Westerly, 8-9, returns to Block Island, 9; uneasy letter to BF, 19, asks BF's advice regarding suitors, 22-23; death of father, 23; writes to BF from Boston, 27; corresponds with BF's wife, 29, attempts to tell BF of approaching marriage, 30, welcomes BF home from England, 31; invites BF to visit, 32, receives visit from BF and Sally F, 35; nurses BF after his fall from horse, 36-37; receives second visit from BF, 39; death of mother, 41; marriage of niece to Gen. Greene, 44-46; baptism, 46; takes in refugees from Boston, 49-50; welcomes BF home from England, 50-51; adds postscript to JM's letter to BF, 55-56; visits Worcester, 57; takes BF to visit Judge Philip Greene, 59; is pleased that BF has taken Ray to Phila. for education, 59-60; tries to cheer BF with note, 63-64; reveals her anxiety for BF on his journey to Canada in three letters to JM, 65-70; writes JM of visit to bereaved Samuel Ward family, 72-75; rejoices at BF's safe return from Canada and his opinion her Ray is worthy of education, 76-77; accompanies her husband to Phila on Colony business, 77-79; describes return journey, 79-81; from Boston writes BF at Paris that JM has left Phila. and is at Coventry, R.I., 84-86, marriage of her daughter to S. Ward, Jr., 88; with JM makes clothing for soldiers, 89; lost letter to BF, 95; writes that JM is her guest, 98-99; praises conduct of French troops, 104-107; in postscript tells of Arnold's ravaging Va., 108-109; writes of two French officers recommended by BF, 109-110; expresses jealousy of French ladies, 111-112, visits Betsey Partridge in Boston, 113; writes of great shock to JM at death of granddaughter, 114-115; adds postscript to husband's letter, 116-117; writes BF of visit to Providence to see dc Segur and that Ray is at Yale, 118-119; sends letter to BF by John Wheelock, 119-120; corresponds with JM, 122-123; writes Sarah Bache of JM's visit, 123; welcomes BF to America, 128; denies being hysterical with joy, 128; visits JM at Boston, 130; writes BF family news, 131-132, last known letter to BF relates that Ray is smart farmer, 133-134; receives last letter from BF, 135-136, continues to correspond and visit with JM 136; obituary, 138; her death serious calamity to family, 138-139

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